



MAIN STREET STRATEGIC PLAN

A Great Street for a Greater Houston:
Redeveloping the Main Street Corridor



The Main Street Corridor Strategic Plan

The Main Street Corridor Strategic Plan is a celebration that is shared with all citizens of the Houston region of our spectacular past and of our exciting future.

We are pleased to present the Main Street Corridor Strategic Plan, the product of over two years of community meetings and urban design workshops. It reflects the concerns and aspirations of the many residents, property owners and stakeholders along the eight mile length of the corridor, stretching from Buffalo Bayou and the Near Northside neighborhood, through Downtown, Midtown, the Museum District, connecting Hermann Park, Rice University and the Texas Medical Center to the South Main area, Reliant Park and the Astrodome complex. The corridor embraces the wonderful diversity of our city, celebrating our past and symbolizing our collective vision for the future. With METRO's new Light Rail Transit system, the corridor will interconnect the major employment, commercial, cultural, educational, religious and recreational activities of our city.

This is one of the most ambitious urban revitalization initiatives of any American city, and one that is much needed in Houston as our economic region competes for knowledge, business and industry talent in the 21st century global marketplace. Quality of life, especially an exciting, active, pedestrian-friendly urban environment has become the hallmark of the 21st century American city. As our "signature boulevard," a revitalized Main Street is a critical step in transforming the heart of our city. The benefits to all citizens are many, a more robust economy, improved public transit, a vibrant cultural life, a multitude of interconnected civic activities and a more sustainable growth environment.

Together with the Main Street Coalition, we ask all of our citizens to become involved in "Making Main Street Happen," joining with us in this visionary redevelopment effort as we build a greater, more humane and livable city.



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January 2001

Less than two years ago, a group of concerned citizens formed a coalition to begin a landmark civic venture for all Houstonians: the redevelopment of Main Street. Mayor Lee P. Brown has described Main Street as “a magnificent urban corridor that touches citizens from all walks of life who make up Houston’s diverse urban family.”

Mayor Brown called upon the Main Street Coalition to establish Main Street as Houston’s signature boulevard for the millennium and to articulate a new vision for the corridor. With this plan, we now have a framework for encouraging development affecting land use and transportation within the corridor through coordinated planning and development by the public, institutional, and private sectors.

The interest of local stakeholders and the Houston community in Main Street is representative of a growing trend nationwide toward inner-city revitalization and strategic corridor redevelopment. The demographics of our nation are changing. An aging “baby boomer” population and a younger generation of two-career couples are fueling a demand for an urban environment with more convenient access to cultural activities, employment, and recreation without heavy reliance on the automobile. Houston’s Main Street provides an opportunity to unite public institutions, the business community, entertainment and cultural venues, sports facilities, and a great medical center with a growing residential population to create a “Signature Corridor.” The Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) system of bus and trolley routes and the planned light rail link between Reliant Park and downtown provide a great opportunity to take advantage of public transit as an impetus for revitalizing blighted portions of the Main Street Corridor and to create a setting that invites and reinforces mixed-use development at higher than suburban densities.

Transforming Main Street into a signature corridor with visual continuity, pedestrian orientation, inviting public spaces, easy parking, and improved mobility will take years of hard work by stakeholders and the cooperation of federal, state, regional, and local governments. I commend our political leaders for their considerable support, including our representatives in Washington and Austin, at Harris County, at METRO, and at City Hall. I salute the commitment of the Main Street Coalition board members who give countless hours of time and effort to this endeavor. The rewards, however, are worth the effort. The health and vitality of Main Street has a beneficial impact on the entire Houston community and will become a focal point of activity for Houston’s diverse community for the millennium.

This strategic plan represents the framework of a process toward meeting the individual and collective goals of Main Street stakeholders and the broader community. We stand ready, with the continued support of our elected leaders, to move forward to meet this difficult yet exhilarating challenge. It is a work in progress and an exciting beginning!

Sincerely,



E. D. Wulfe
Chair, Main Street Coalition



GOALS OF MAIN STREET COALITION

Create the highest quality urban spaces along the length of Main Street from Quitman Street north of UH Downtown to the I-610 South Loop that produce memorable, exciting, and amenable pedestrian environments along the corridor and link adjacent communities.



Create a positive climate for development that complements the evolving distinctive character of the Main Street Corridor and achieves a positive synergy among diverse civic, business, and governmental projects.



Support optimal infrastructure decisions for the corridor including transportation, flood control, utilities, drainage, etc.



Seek and utilize transit systems to support land use planning and joint-use development opportunities.



Eliminate blight, and remove negative signs of disorder.



Make this initiative a notable example of a public-private partnership that effectively engages stakeholders and establish partnerships for areas not currently sponsored.



Implement short-term priority projects to build momentum and test concepts.



Employ public information and participation strategies to build awareness of, consensus about, and support for Main Street Corridor development.



Develop organizational and funding mechanisms to support this effort that are effective and efficient and have legitimacy with key stakeholders.

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Section I. Plan Overview

Houston's Main Street Corridor becomes a signature statement in a great city known worldwide as beautiful, dynamic, and diverse—a city that gets things done. — Main Street Coalition Vision Statement



Aerial View of Houston's Main Street from Reliant Park to Downtown

COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Main Street Coalition was organized in 1998, in response to a challenge by Mayor Lee P. Brown. With the support of Mayor Brown, Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, the Houston City Council, the Harris County Commissioners Court, and other elected officials, the Main Street Coalition formed a nonprofit corporation - a public-private partnership with the participation of more than 75 government agencies, nonprofit organizations, private companies, and individuals. Working individually and in concert, Coalition members have accomplished great things towards creating a great Main Street.

- Drafted this 20-year Strategic Plan to revitalize the Main Street Corridor by drawing on extensive community input, and professional expertise in planning and development, public, and private finance and legal strategies.
- Created *Main Street Corridor Master Plan: Design Concepts for Main Street*, identifying “outside the box” concepts to transform Main Street, drawing on ideas generated in an urban design competition sponsored by Making Main Street Happen, Inc.
- Raised more than \$6 million in federal, state, local, and private funds for project design and implementation, planning, coordination and communication (ongoing).
- Created an unprecedented collaboration for fundraising, planning, and public involvement through a website, press conferences, workshops and town hall meetings attended by 500 participants, two newsletters sent to 1,000 organizations and individuals, and 20,000 invitations mailed to corridor businesses and homes to see and vote on visions for Main Street shown at Lawndale Art Center (ongoing).
- Completed two studies (one performed by the City and one performed by a private firm) that estimated the incremental economic development impact for light rail.
- Facilitated communication with Houston METRO to develop light rail design specifications for sleekly designed vehicles, single-line catenary, a garden pathway treatment for the alignment, and a refined prototype design for the stations (ongoing).
- Partnered with Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation to create a future dramatic entry to Reliant Park from Main Street (ongoing).
- Partnered with the Texas Department of Transportation, Houston, Harris County, and Trees for Houston create a great allee of 600 oak trees where Main Street is being reconstructed from Kirby Street to I-610 South Loop (ongoing).
- Identified projects for prompt action including gateways, joint use transit centers, major cultural venues, plazas, and east-west linkages to neighborhoods and key destinations (ongoing).
- The U.S. Federal Highway Administration recognized Main Street redevelopment efforts as exemplifying “best practices” in urban revitalization.



New Street Signs for Main Street

PLAN OVERVIEW

A Great Street for a Greater Houston: Redeveloping the Main Street Corridor describes the Coalition's commitment to create a signature boulevard stretching from Houston's Near Northside to Reliant Park. This strategic plan provides a framework for addressing the integration of land use, transportation, and development planning as they relate to the evolution of Main Street as a signature corridor and as a major activity center. The plan is a document that must evolve and constantly be revised based on the results of a continuing process of planning and consensus building. An important focus of all future efforts should be the connections between the Corridor and neighborhoods in all directions.

Implementation of the Main Street Strategic Plan will require 20 years to complete and a combination of public and private sector resources that the Coalition preliminarily estimates at \$200 million. As described below, this investment in high-quality infrastructure, new public spaces, and improved community linkages will revitalize Main Street, further stimulate private sector involvement, support new museums and institutions, create jobs, and attract a projected \$1 billion in additional development that would otherwise not occur in the Corridor.

This strategic plan, prepared by The Goodman Corporation in concert with Coalition stakeholders, is based upon principles contained within the *Main Street Corridor Master Plan* completed by Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects. The strategic plan represents a progressive approach to seize opportunities presented by METRO's light rail plan and create the framework for bold achievements that will establish Main Street among the great boulevards of the world. Implementation of the plan is based on the following strategic approaches.

Encourage the completion of public projects underway on Main Street. (see page IV-2)

Several major projects are underway or have already been approved, and require only sustained effort to ensure that funding and construction plans continue to have public support. METRO Light Rail, Cotswold, the Downtown "Superstop," the Downtown Transit Center, Allen's Landing, the Southwest Freeway Reconstruction with an enhanced off-ramp, major flood control projects, and the South Main Street Enhancement Project are critical infrastructure projects that will initiate Main Street's transformation into a signature corridor.

Adopt Main Street Corridor Design Guidelines for the public right-of-way. (see page IV-8)

The City should adopt design standards for a "Main Street Corridor Design District" to implement the Master Plan recommendations regarding the appearance of the public right-of-way. In addition, private development guidelines can be established through the authority of the Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone and other public/private partnership initiatives along the Corridor to ensure a quality of private development that is consistent with the public investment in infrastructure. The design standards and the private development guidelines should call for the integration of civic art enhancements.

Enhance Main Street and the light rail alignment to create an integrated corridor. (see page IV-11)

To create exciting station areas and streetscape amenities on Main Street and along the light rail line where it departs from Main Street, the Coalition recommends investments in trees, fountains, other aesthetic enhancements, and pedestrian enhancements such as sidewalks, lighting, and other features of street furniture.

Link adjacent neighborhoods to the Corridor with high-quality pedestrian districts. (see page IV-16)

Critical linkages should be established connecting the Main Street Corridor east and west to adjacent neighborhoods and employment centers. The Coalition and its stakeholders should work with the City of Houston, Harris County, and METRO, using federal funds and other resources, to build high-quality pedestrian linkages, amenities, and other infrastructure to enhance districts all along the Corridor. In some areas, repairs and reconstruction of streets and utilities are needed to support a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Enhance transit ridership and attract private development with parking facilities. (see page IV-21)

The Coalition and its stakeholders should work with the City of Houston, Harris County, and METRO to identify feasible locations for transit-supportive parking facilities that would attract private development. Public investment in parking facilities to encourage and support private development should reduce traffic congestion and provide a revenue source for public improvements in the Corridor. Further analysis of these proposals is needed to identify feasible locations and project components.

Examine long-term redevelopment projects in key areas of the Corridor. (see page IV-23)

The Master Plan includes several dramatic redevelopment projects that would enhance the visual identity and functionality of the Corridor. However, further definition of these conceptual projects is necessary to resolve major policy issues and develop cost estimates as these projects are fully crystallized. Among the conceptual projects are a signature arrival element and a street-and-block plan for North Main near the University of Houston-Downtown, a major water feature as a centerpiece of new development in the Reliant Park area, a major plaza at Holcombe embracing both Main and Fannin, a “diagonal boulevard” in the southern end of Downtown, a central flower market in Midtown, and conversion of Southwest Freeway Spur 527 into a parkway. The Coalition will also participate in special projects, such as the proposed High School for the Performing and Visual Arts campus.

Establish continuous support for the Main Street Coalition's vision to ensure the facilitation and coordination of public and private projects along the Corridor. (see page IV-28)

The focus and impetus necessary to implement this strategic plan will require fundraising, communications and coordination in the design and phasing of capital improvements. Moving forward may also entail an evolution in the roles and legal authority of the Coalition, its participant stakeholders, or new entities that may need to be created.

Funding capital improvements in the strategic plan. (see page IV-29)

The 20-year, \$200 million redevelopment plan for the Main Street Corridor includes three components.

- **\$80 million from local government.** An estimated \$80 million in local funds will be requested to implement the Main Street Master Plan. These funds could be provided through the capital improvement programs of the City of Houston, the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, Harris County, and METRO.
- **\$95 million from federal and state funds.** With a policy commitment by the City and METRO to prioritize Main Street in federal and state funding requests, approximately \$85 million in federal and \$10 million in state funds would be requested for implementation of the Main Street Master Plan over the next 20 years.
- **\$25 million in private, institutional, and philanthropic funds.** If local government demonstrates a commitment to create a signature Main Street and ensure its revitalization, the Coalition will request about \$30 million to support specific components of the Master Plan. Educational and nonprofit institutions located along the Corridor will be asked to fund about \$5 million in pedestrian and other infrastructure improvements that specifically benefit users of their facilities. About \$10 million in private capital will be sought to partially fund projects like a proposed central flower market. Philanthropic and corporate contributions will be asked to fund about \$10 million in trees, fountains, art, and other specific beautification elements.

This investment in Main Street will create a signature boulevard, benefiting the community by:

- Enhancing the viability of residential neighborhoods;
- Reinforcing the multi-billion dollar public and private investment boom in the inner city; and
- Attracting an estimated additional \$1 billion in further residential, retail and office development to the Main Street Corridor.

The anticipated economic impact of the additional projected development will generate sufficient increased revenues to the City to more than offset project costs.

As Houston enters the 21st Century, the city's urban character and cultural diversity are more clearly pronounced along the Main Street Corridor from Downtown to Reliant Park than anywhere in Houston. Restoring the historic role of Main Street as the main street for Houston will be a civic legacy that will help make Houston shine as a livable city.

A commitment to the implementation of this plan will require leadership to ensure sustained support. It is focused on creating a signature Main Street, through a partnership that can achieve results, supported by a realistic and appropriate funding strategy. The continued leadership of the Mayor and City Council, the County Judge and Commissioners Court, and Houston METRO are essential to the revitalization of Main Street and the creation of a legacy that is known worldwide as a reflection of a great Houston!

Section II. Redevelopment Partnership

The Main Street Coalition has developed consensus among the stakeholders of the corridor and the public on its vision and goals for the corridor. The redevelopment process formally began with the establishment of the Main Street Coalition in 1998 by Mayor Lee P. Brown. The background of this process is illustrated by the renewal of interest during the 1990s.

RENEWED INTEREST IN MAIN STREET

AIA Main Street Urban Design Charrette – 1992

After reading that taxicab drivers were avoiding Main Street during the 1992 Republican Convention, the Houston Chapter of the American Institute of Architects launched an urban design charrette for Main Street. The ambitious charrette and report examined Main Street with a critical eye and proposed ways to begin revitalization in the heart of Houston.

Making Main Street Happen, Inc. – 1994

Making Main Street Happen, Inc., a nonprofit entity promoting the design and development of important civic parks, plazas, landmarks, and buildings, followed with provocative proposals for monumental arches, new parks, and a grand boulevard, published in *Houston Life*. Its activities helped advance interest in a comprehensive public-private revitalization program for the Main Street Corridor.

Main Street Task Force (Downtown) – 1994

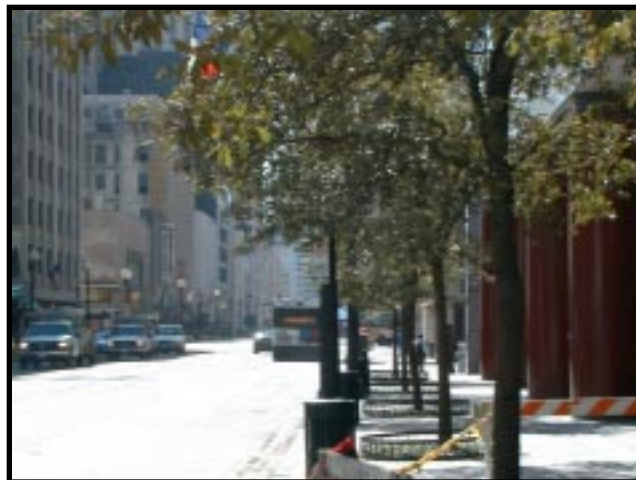
Downtown Main Street stakeholders began meeting to chart a recovery strategy. Several specific initiatives were launched, including a downtown ice rink on Main Street (the last four years), cleanup of deteriorated signage and building facades, and improvements to traffic flow through the elimination of right turn restrictions.

METRO Major Investment Study – 1998

The Metropolitan Transit Authority studied Main Street as a high-capacity transit corridor. In 1999, METRO selected light rail as the preferred option for meeting future transit demand in the Corridor.

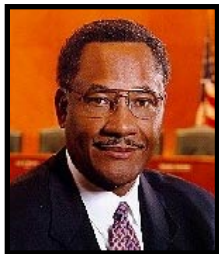
Federal Support for Main Street – 1999

The City of Houston and the Main Street Coalition successfully achieved financial commitments for Main Street revitalization through two federal transportation programs.



Current Conditions on Downtown Main Street

MAIN STREET COALITION ESTABLISHED - 1998



Mayor Lee P. Brown

The Main Street Coalition was organized in 1998 in response to a challenge by Mayor Lee P. Brown to create Main Street as Houston's signature boulevard for the 21st Century. With the support of Mayor Lee P. Brown, Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, the Houston City Council, the Harris County Commissioners Court, and other elected officials, the Main Street Coalition formed a nonprofit corporation — a public-private partnership with the participation of more than 75 government agencies, nonprofit organizations, private companies, and individuals.



Judge Robert Eckels

A Board of Directors and an Advisory Board guide the activities of the coalition. The coalition has received funding from the City of Houston, Harris County, METRO, and private contributions. The coalition has also successfully sponsored initiatives for federal and state funding.

Hundreds of individuals, organizations, government agencies, civic groups, and businesses have participated in coalition activities. The coalition has hosted or cosponsored numerous workshops, charrettes, stakeholder meetings, a town hall meeting, and a design competition and exhibit.

Mission of Main Street Coalition

The Main Street Corridor, linking Downtown to Reliant Park, is to become an urban place warranting local, national, and international recognition in the next millennium. The Main Street Coalition, formed by governments, businesses, institutions, and organizations, will develop plans, pursue programs and policies, and establish a framework to implement projects that accomplish this mission.

RATIONALE FOR CORRIDOR DEFINITION

The Main Street Corridor, from Quitman on the north to the I-610 South Loop, is a major regional destination and a high-capacity transit corridor. The Corridor is the spine of Houston's transportation networks, economic opportunities, residential communities, and cultural institutions. Enhancement of the Corridor will further bind neighborhoods and districts together into a system with common interests and visual identity.



Main Street from Quitman to I-610 South Loop

As a high-capacity transit corridor, people rely on public transportation and sidewalks, as well as private vehicles, to travel within the corridor. These criteria led METRO to select this corridor as the area to be served by the current light rail system plan. The boundaries of the Main Street Corridor designated by the Coalition take the METRO analysis into account.

2000 Employment Estimates Main Street Corridor	
SEGMENT:	EMPLOYMENT:
Downtown	145,418
Midtown	25,551
Texas Medical Center	53,901
South Main	20,310
Total	245,180

*Source: City of Houston Planning and
Development Department*

MAIN STREET CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS

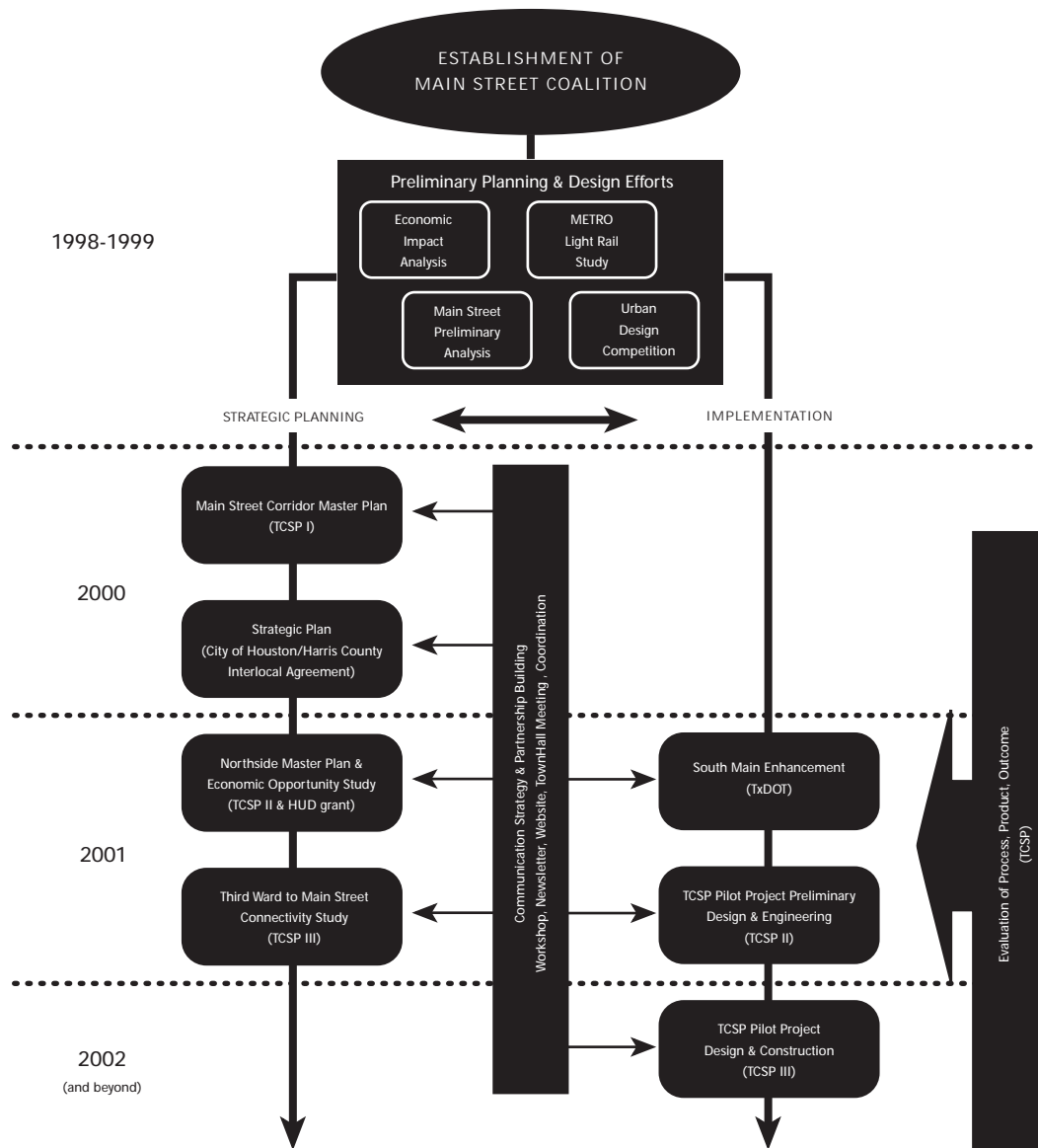
The Main Street Coalition is working to coordinate the planning efforts of a number of public, quasi-public, and private agencies and organizations focused on making Main Street a shining example of urban living, cultural diversity, and economic vitality. The Coalition is creating a cohesive urban vision for this regionally important corridor.

The Coalition's effort to create this vision has included three main components: stakeholder consultation, a master plan, and this strategic plan. The stakeholder consultation has resulted in the creation of the Coalition, an international urban design competition sponsored by Making Main Street Happen, Inc., and a successful application for federal funding to enhance the South Main Street project.

The *Main Street Corridor Master Plan: Design Concepts for Main Street* was developed by Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects (EE&K) under contract with the Houston Planning and Development Department with the support of the federal Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program (refer to appendix D). The plan reflects the goals of the Main Street Coalition and translates them into a physical vision and design recommendations for long-term implementation.

The Master Plan recommends an innovative, long-term approach for (1) coordinating private and public investment activities along the Corridor; (2) establishing a high quality design environment; and (3) improving transportation efficiency by encouraging dense development in a pedestrian-oriented environment. The Master Plan, along with other related work completed for stakeholders by EE&K, provides a framework and guidelines that are being incorporated into the METRO light rail preliminary engineering design process.

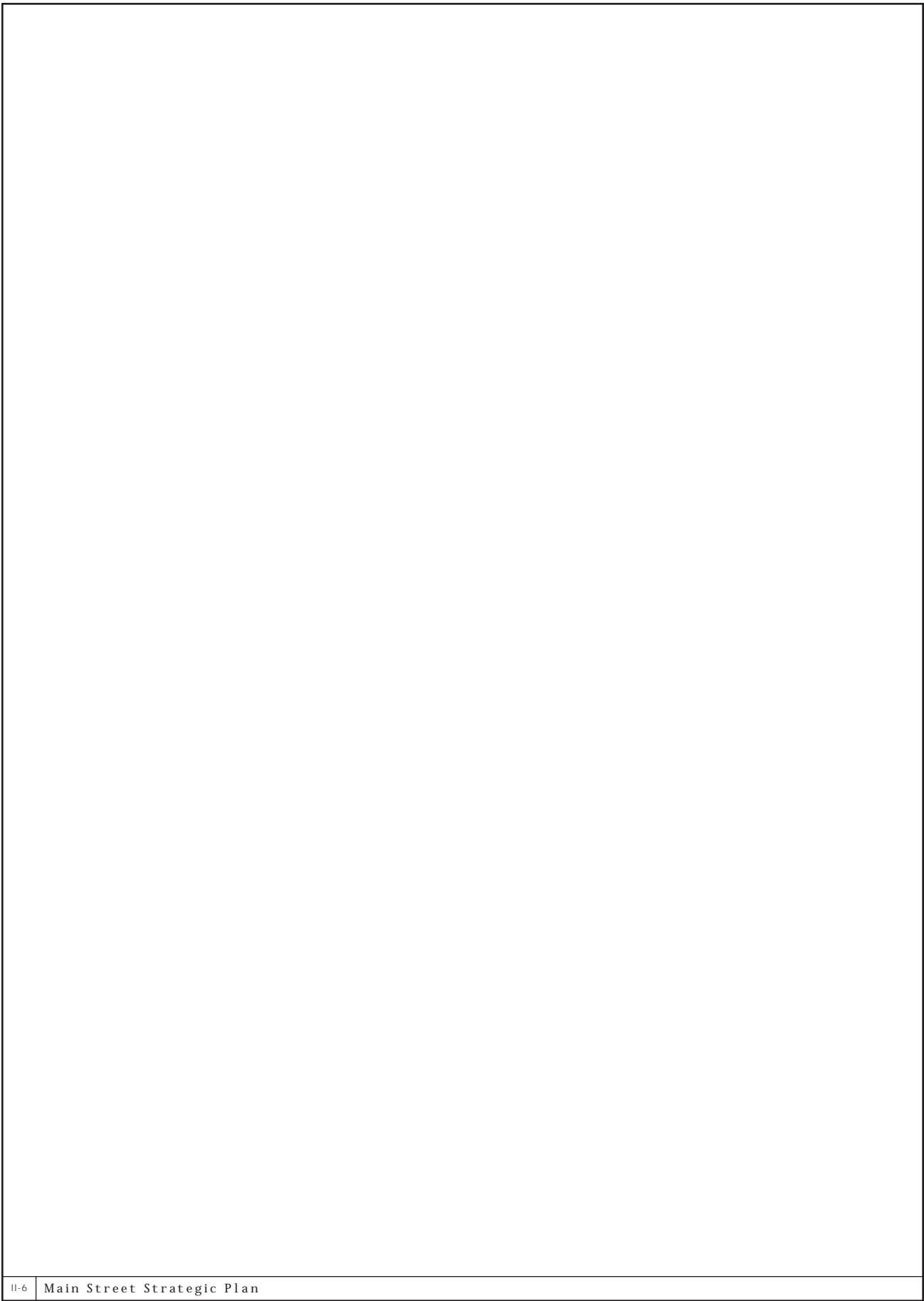
REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS



The effort to reach consensus on this strategic plan began in March 1999 when the City of Houston and Harris County contracted with the Main Street Coalition to manage the planning process for the Corridor and implement a process of public involvement to build consensus. The coalition engaged The Goodman Corporation and JWR3 Interests to develop a strategic plan for the Corridor, identify specific pilot projects within the Corridor, and pursue funding strategies.

The strategic planning process has involved consideration and integration of individual stakeholder concerns and a focus on maximizing opportunities to build on existing and future development. Among the many organizations involved are Central Houston, Inc., South Main Center Association, Midtown Redevelopment Authority, and Third Ward Redevelopment Council — together the Coalition's stakeholders have played an important role in bringing together the public and private sectors in important revitalization projects. Among the activities that have been the focus of these planning efforts are the METRO Major Investment Study and decision to support a light rail system for Main Street, the Market Square and Midtown tax increment reinvestment zones, the Texas Department of Transportation's South Main Street and US 59 improvements, and the Making Main Street Happen design competition. To prepare this strategic plan, the Main Street Coalition conducted workshops, town hall meetings, and numerous informal meetings, and participated in activities sponsored by other stakeholders for the purpose of obtaining input into the development of a corridor revitalization strategy.

The Main Street revitalization process is a working example of how integrated long-range planning can be implemented in Houston with substantial input from its citizens. This collaboration is not only targeted to achieving revitalization, but also to broadening the public's view of planning as a process looking beyond the narrow limits of neighborhood and district boundaries to partnerships that stabilize and improve all the parts of the corridor.



Section III. About Main Street

Mayor Lee Brown has said that redeveloping Main Street in the 21st Century could be as important to Houston as constructing the ship channel was in the 20th Century. The Main Street Corridor should be seen as the spine of Houston's 617 square miles. However, in past years certain sections have experienced serious decline, with fragmented and haphazard construction, even as other areas have benefited from high quality urban development.

The Main Street Corridor is as distinctive for the variety of neighborhoods, cultures, and institutions that it connects and traverses as it is for being the longest Main Street in the United States. Main Street is anchored by Houston's founding site at Allen's Landing and the Astrodome, the first domed stadium in the country, forming a unique journey from Houston's past to its present. These eight historic miles include the Near Northside neighborhood on the banks of White Oak and Buffalo bayous, Downtown, Midtown, Museum District, Hermann Park, Rice University, and Texas Medical Center, crossing Brays Bayou on the way to monumental anchors at Reliant Park. Over 245,000 people find employment in the Corridor and over 40,000 people live nearby. Along substantial portions of this corridor, allees of oak trees are an important visual theme that creates an inviting and stately setting to enhance pedestrian and transportation activity.



Wortham Park in Texas Medical Center at Main Street and Holcombe Boulevard

While bayou and freeway intersections are distinctive points within the corridor, they represent both opportunities and challenges to achieving quality urban design. The two major bayou systems, Buffalo/White Oak and Brays, create beautiful greenways but periodic flooding has proven difficult to manage. The four freeway intersections between Quitman and the South Loop (I-10, I-45, US 59, and I-610 South Loop) are all elevated as they cross Main Street, creating visual barriers to the street while none of these freeway intersections presently offers a direct exit ramp to Main Street.

Many of Houston's most diverse and historic neighborhoods, home to over 40,000 people, are linked to the Main Street Corridor. The Near Northside is a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood located north of White Oak and Buffalo bayous. Downtown and Midtown reflect history and new development as the areas along Main Street with the most urban character. Greater Third Ward and Fourth Ward flank these areas to the east and west. Greater Third Ward is a richly diverse community with residents of every income level. To the west, Montrose, Museum District, and Rice University area neighborhoods have a mix of single-family, townhouse, and apartment neighborhoods. South of Holcombe Boulevard, neighborhoods east of Main Street are primarily multifamily developments, and neighborhoods to its west are primarily single-family residences.



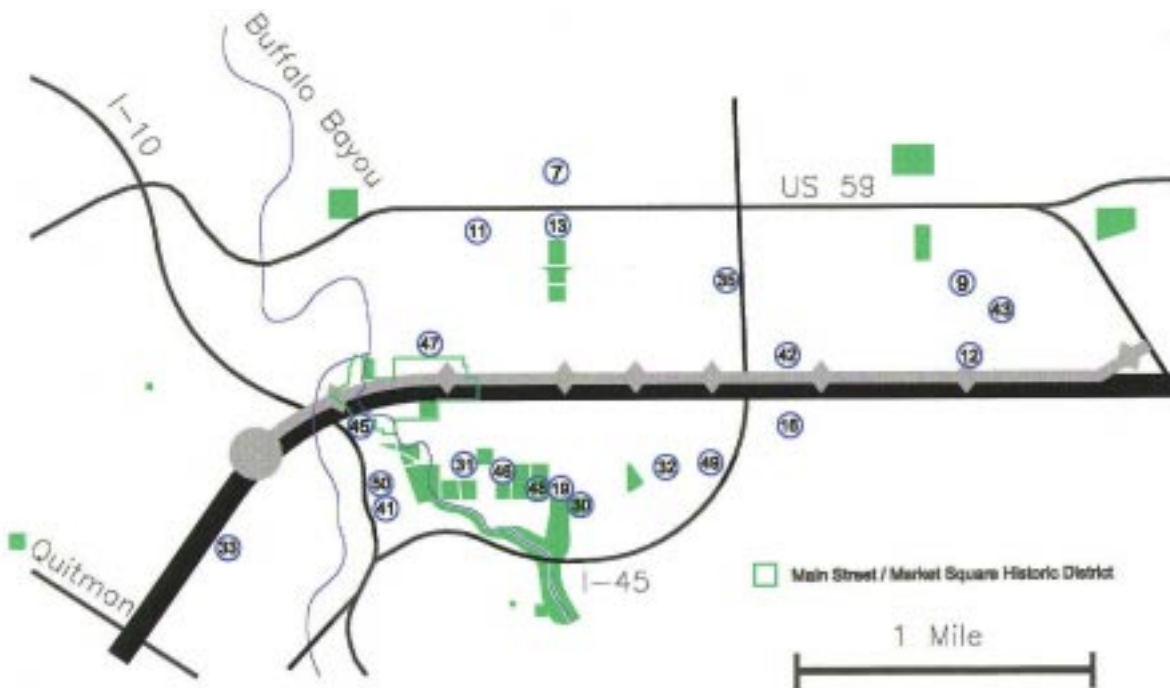
Downtown Main Street Circa 1925

Along the Main Street Corridor, many of Houston's most well-known attractions and venues bring residents together and attract millions of visitors each year to the cultural and entertainment offerings at the Theater District, Museum District, Hermann Park, Reliant Park, and the George R. Brown Convention Center. Thousands of hotel rooms provide accommodations for visitors. Health care is a top priority for many who are drawn to Houston's top-flight medical facilities, particularly the Texas Medical Center institutions.

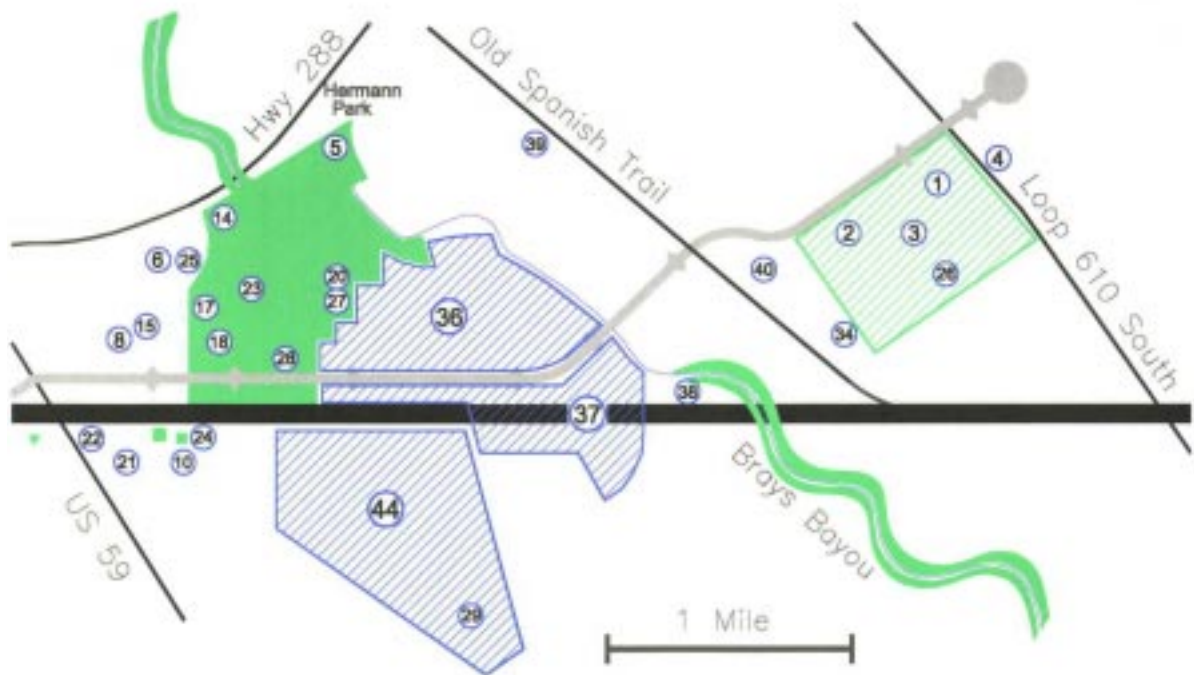


Main Gate of Rice University on Main Street at Sunset Boulevard

The Corridor is home to institutions of higher learning enrolling thousands of students each year and serving the community in a variety of ways. The Texas Medical Center houses 11 schools for health professions. The University of Houston Downtown, Rice University, and Houston Community College Central Campus are all located along the Corridor. Other major educational campuses are located east and west of the Corridor, including the University of Houston Main Campus, Texas Southern University, and the University of St. Thomas.



Main Street from Quitman to I-610 South Loop



Map Legend

CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES

1. Reliant Park Astroarena/Astrohall
2. Reliant Park - New Exhibit Hall
3. Reliant Park Astrodome
4. Reliant Park Astroworld
5. Bayou Parkland
6. Children's Museum
7. Chinatown
8. Clayton Library
9. Community Artists Collective
10. Contemporary Arts Museum
11. Enron Field
12. Ensemble Theatre
13. George R. Brown Convention Center
14. Hermann Park Golf Course
15. Holocaust Museum Houston
16. Houston Fire Museum
17. Houston Garden Center
18. Houston Museum of Natural Science
19. Houston Public Library-Central Branch
20. Houston Zoo
21. Jung Center of Houston
22. Lawndale Art Center
23. Miller Outdoor Theatre
24. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
25. Museum of Health and Medical Science
26. NFL/Rodeo Stadium
27. Pioneer Memorial Log House Museum
28. Playground for All Children
29. Rice University Stadium
30. Texas History Museum
31. Theater District
32. YMCA-Downtown

MEDICAL FACILITIES

33. Casa de Amigos
34. Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center
35. St. Joseph Medical Complex
36. Texas Medical Center-Main Campus
 - a. Baylor College of Medicine
 - b. Ben Taub General Hospital
 - c. Institute of Religion
 - d. Memorial Hermann Hospital
 - e. Methodist Hospital
 - f. St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital
 - g. Texas Children's Hospital
 - h. Texas Women's University
 - i. The Institution for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR)
 - j. University of Houston Health Science Center
 - k. University of Houston School of Pharmacy
 - l. University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
 - m. University of Texas School of Public Health
37. Texas Medical Center-Main Street District
 - a. Diagnostic Center Hospital
 - b. Edwin Hornberger Conference Center
 - c. Houston Community College
 - d. Prairie View A&M University
 - e. Shriners Hospital for Children
38. Texas Orthopedic Hospital
39. Veterans Affairs Medical Center
40. Woman's Hospital of Texas

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

41. Amtrak Station
42. Intercity Bus Terminals

ACADEMIC FACILITIES

43. Houston Community College-Main Campus
44. Rice University
45. University of Houston-Downtown

GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

46. Bob Casey Federal Courthouse
47. Harris County Courts Buildings
48. Houston City Hall
49. Mickey Leland Federal Building
50. U.S. Postal Service-Downtown

HISTORY OF MAIN STREET*

Main Street's history reflects Houston's history — from the 1880s through the 1950s, Main Street was Houston, in essence, and it became the longest Main Street in the United States.

From Houston's origins in the 1830s to the 1880s, Main Street was the economic center of Houston, linking wharfs, commercial buildings, public institutions, and residential neighborhoods. Main Street was also where the city came together politically. It formed the common boundary line bordering the four political wards established by the city's charter of 1839, a system that lasted until 1905.

Main Street emerged as Houston's "grand avenue" in the 1880s, and its homes characterized the street as a symbol of enterprise and prosperity. After 1910, however, these homes began to give way to new development and the transformation of Main Street into an automobile-oriented transportation corridor.

Growing use of the automobile led to street improvements in 1916-17 that transformed Main Street into a divided, paved boulevard flanked by double rows of live oak trees. The project stimulated the development of new cultural institutions and recreational amenities. Main Street then stretched 3 1/2 miles from downtown to the Rice Institute, Hermann Park, the Museum of Fine Arts, Hermann Hospital, elaborate churches, deluxe apartment-hotels, and upper-income residential neighborhoods.

Paradoxically, this new boulevard initiated the reversal of Main Street's historic role by carrying people out of the city rather than into it. Between 1913 and the 1930s, Main Street was gradually connected to other streets to reach Airline Drive to the north and Old Spanish Trail to the south, the primary highways to Dallas and South Texas, respectively. These extensions were not characterized by the concentrated building pattern of downtown, but rather by dispersed buildings such as motels and drive-in restaurants. Eventually, landscaped medians were removed to accommodate the increased traffic on Houston's first suburban retail corridor.

Between 1945 and 1955, Houston's Main Street era reached its apogee with the construction of Foley's department store downtown, Texas Medical Center, and the Shamrock Hotel located near the medical center. The corridor continued to sustain the construction of office buildings and other activity through the 1950s.



1947 Architect's Rendering of Foley's Department Store at Main Street and Lamar



US59 Southwest Freeway Overpass at Fannin Street

Main Street's decline began when the pressures of traffic congestion led to the construction of a citywide system of freeways between the 1950s and the 1970s. Because the freeway system was independent of and not directly connected to Main Street, the retail corridor collapsed in the 1960s. Most of the Spanish style buildings of the 1920s disappeared even more swiftly than the Victorian mansions of the old residential district had during the 1920s and 1930s. Between downtown and the Museum District, Main Street became a transitional area, and the downtown retail district began to decline as Post Oak Boulevard assumed the role of Houston's foremost retail street after 1970.

Certain areas along the Main Street Corridor continued to be strong throughout these several decades of change. Downtown experienced episodic office building construction, but prime development was concentrated to the west of Main Street, and it was vulnerable to problems during energy-related busts. The zone of cultural institutions around the Museum of Fine Arts and Rice University was augmented by new institutional construction. The Texas Medical Center area saw the continuous expansion of medical institutions and related office buildings and hotels. A new district developed around the last great monument of the Main Street era, when the Astrodome was built in 1969 and heralded as the eighth wonder of the world. However, what is now called Reliant Park actually lies to the east of Main Street, and its critical transportation links were directed towards freeways.



Astrodome at Reliant Park from Murworth at South Main

In the 1990s, private real estate development and public infrastructure investment started a multi-billion dollar comeback of the Main Street Corridor. The public sector is reconstructing streets, designing a light rail system, creating new parks, and developing better flood control strategies. New educational, medical, research, arts, and sports facilities are attracting attention all along Main Street. The problems of Main Street - and the opportunities offered by the new development - sparked interest in renewing Main Street as the signature boulevard of a great city.

*Abridged from Stephen Fox, "Main Street History," *Main Street Houston - An Urban Design Charrette and Exhibition*, 1992, American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter.

CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION CONCEPTS

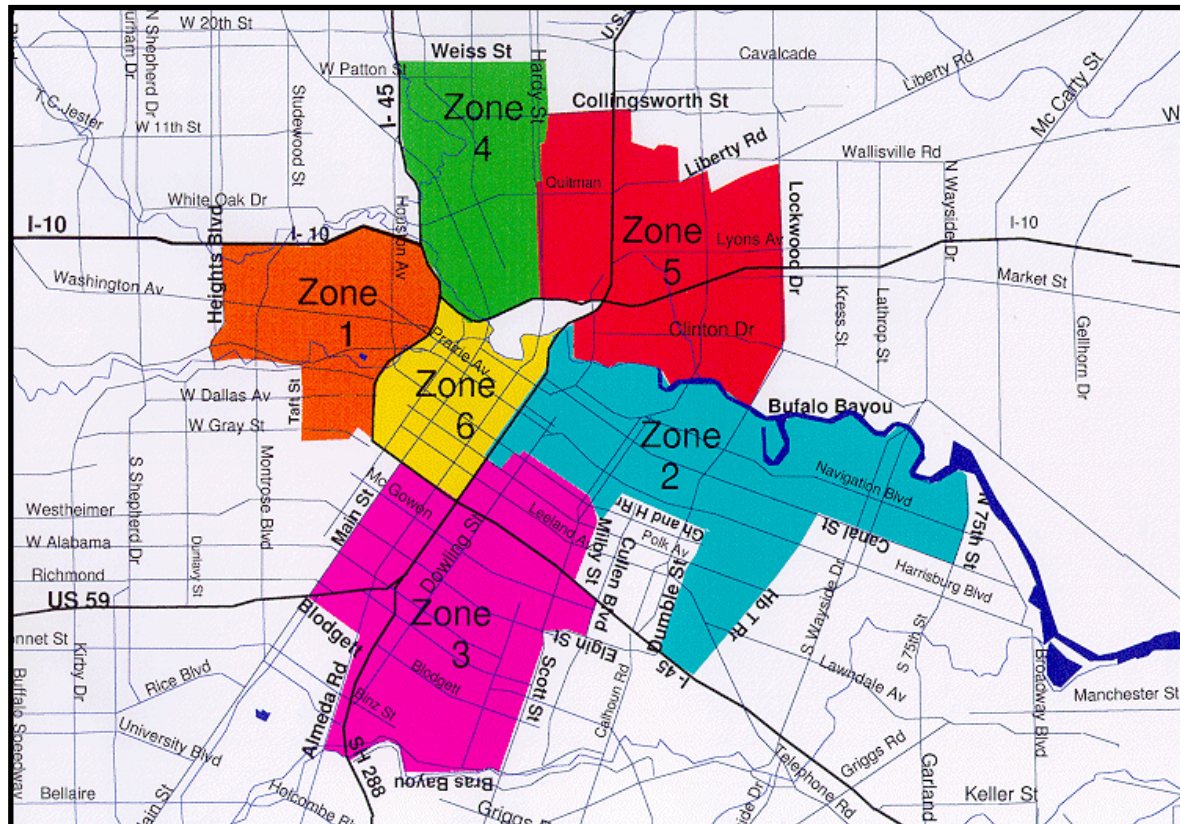
The Main Street Corridor is a focus of inner-city redevelopment efforts because of its historical importance in shaping the character of Houston and the emerging changes in mobility patterns. Revitalization of the Corridor through the integration of land-use planning with transit improvements reflects a recognition and preference to emphasize coordination and guidelines to leverage investment rather than regulation to effect redevelopment. This redevelopment offers an opportunity to provide an alternative to low-density development that characterizes much of Houston, to create a pedestrian-friendly corridor unique in Houston, and to increase access to jobs and services - particularly for areas of the city where economic development lags behind the overall trend.

The historical importance of the Main Street Corridor is reflected in both positive and problematic ways. For decades, Main Street exemplified the growth and progress of Houston as its "grand avenue." Yet, in recent decades, areas of the Corridor have fallen into decline as the freeway system encouraged development away from the inner city.



Cotswold Project Detail with Trolley at Main Street and Prairie

Emerging changes in mobility patterns offer an opportunity to reconnect the Main Street Corridor as Houston's link to economic and social vitality. Mobility patterns are being changed as new residential development occurs in the inner city and new highway, street, and transit system construction is taking place. Parts of the Corridor are now experiencing booming growth, but must now grapple with the need for improved transit service and regional parking solutions.



Federally Designated Enhanced Enterprise Community

An important concern for the city is to connect distressed neighborhoods and poorer citizens to jobs and services. Many of the people in these areas have minimal skills and mobility, and the education, jobs, transit, and social services available along the Main Street Corridor are critical resources to creating a better future. Much of this inner-city core is included in an Enhanced Enterprise Community that encompasses 20 square miles with a population of over 100,000, about half of whom are children and young adults. Over 40 percent of the families within these boundaries exist below the poverty rate. The Main Street Corridor can enhance the connections to the services needed to create opportunities for all Houstonians.

The Main Street Corridor is a place where compact, diverse, high-density development can take place offering a unique alternative to the low-density development that characterizes much of Houston. Through the coordination and leveraging of infrastructure projects with private investment, the Corridor can be developed to offer convenient access to transit, employment centers, cultural institutions, and recreational opportunities.

High-quality open spaces and pedestrian environments enhance and encourage new development. In addition to encouraging the use of the transit system (which reduces congestion, air pollution, and the need for parking facilities), pedestrian-friendly areas will attract people to the Corridor and enhance its economic development. Additional parks, including both “pocket parks” and some larger places, are needed to provide adequate public space throughout the Corridor. Open spaces and pedestrian environments, from sidewalks to new parks, can be created through coordination and leveraging of investment.

In addition to these concepts, discussed during the corridor-wide planning process, specific and sometimes unique challenges in various parts of the Corridor are also a concern of the Main Street Coalition. These challenges have been discussed both at the corridor-wide level and within the stakeholder groups representing each area.



Contemporary Arts Museum Pocket Park Entrance on Montrose Boulevard and Bissonnet



Russ Andorka

Reliant Stadium Construction

The South Main / Reliant Park area, from Brays Bayou to I-610 South Loop, welcomes millions of visitors each year to the Astrodome and Astroworld, hosts the annual Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo and major exhibitions such as the Offshore Technology Conference, offers 3,500 hotel rooms, and borders diverse residential areas. The Astrodome complex, renamed Reliant Park in 2000, is somewhat separated from South Main Street. Old Spanish Trail merges with South Main Street as US 90A, the old east-west route to San Antonio. Freeway access and the divergence of Main and Fannin streets south of Brays Bayou are the most important features of the area road network.

To the west of the area, Main Street borders single-family residential neighborhoods. To the east, Fannin Street borders multifamily residential neighborhoods. Between Main Street and Fannin, available land is dedicated to the Reliant Park, hotels, the Texas Medical Center, and a mix of multifamily residential and commercial development.

When the Astrodome was built, South Main Street was Houston's foremost family entertainment destination. With suburbanization, South Main experienced severe economic decline that is being countered by the reconstruction of Main Street, the new Reliant Stadium, and new Reliant Park convention facilities. Many properties on South Main are vacant or blighted, having a negative impact on the security of nearby residential neighborhoods, discouraging retail development, and affecting the public perception of the area.

Excellent regional access, substantial public and institutional ownership, and large parcels of undeveloped land create an opportunity for transformative change. Good collaborative planning will be an important element to ensure that major investments are complementary to each other and to the area's residential neighborhoods. Future challenges for the area include a complete redesign of Reliant Park, expansion of Texas Medical Center facilities, the light rail system, the beautification of South Main Street, and implementation of Brays Bayou flood control projects.

Initiatives that build on these efforts may include creating a major exhibition park with a system of parking areas and waterways that provide detention; park-and-ride opportunities linked to light rail; enhancing links from Main Street to Reliant Park; enhancing links to southeast Harris and Fort Bend counties; promoting public art and scenic initiatives in conjunction with infrastructure projects and private investment (such as potential renovation of the fountain at Fannin and Greenbriar); and vigorously enforcing security and nuisance prevention measures.

CHALLENGES IN TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER / RICE UNIVERSITY AREA



Hermann Hospital at the Corner of Fannin and MacGregor Facing Hermann Park

Over the past 50 years, the Texas Medical Center has grown to become one of the world's finest medical centers for patient care, research, and education. Rice University lies adjacent to the northwestern edge of Texas Medical Center and has a similar mission of research and education. These campuses are composed primarily of institutional land uses, along with supporting land uses such as retail, office, and some residential. This major activity center draws employees from throughout the Houston area, and its employment density is compatible with transit improvements.

The Texas Medical Center faces the challenge of continued dramatic growth by many of its 42 member institutions for the foreseeable future. Its regional priorities are to ensure that transit, open space, flood control, and access improvements are identified and are realized in order to facilitate this future planned campus growth.

Rice University has launched “Rice: The Next Century Campaign” to raise \$500 million by 2003 to fund programs to enhance undergraduate education and student life, strengthen the faculty and graduate programs, expand and strengthen outreach, and increase the annual fund. These programs entail extensive capital work for new buildings designed to preserve campus beauty, structured and underground parking that preserves green space, and a new all-electric shuttle system that makes transportation even cleaner and quieter.

The residential neighborhoods, retail shopping village, businesses, institutions, and civic associations around Rice University have formed an association called University Place that successfully sought a super neighborhood designation to better address traffic, infrastructure, beautification, and neighborhood protection needs in the area between Main Street and Kirby Drive from US 59 to Brays Bayou.

The Texas Medical Center is currently served by transit connecting the campus facilities and remote parking facilities, local bus routes from nearby residential areas, and park-and-ride routes from suburban transit centers. Four of the proposed light rail stations will serve Texas Medical Center, including the Galen transit transfer center and remote parking at the Smith Lands location. Area stakeholders are studying the possibility of a regional circulator trolley to enhance mobility among the activity centers. The planned light rail stations at Sunset and MacGregor will provide access for students, employees, and visitors and link to the Rice University shuttle system.

Flooding is a key issue for stakeholders and neighborhoods in this area; as such, a federally funded program of flood control improvements planned by the Harris County Flood Control District for Brays Bayou will include bridge replacement and channel widening. Addressing the flooding impact of the Harris Gully is also critical.

The Museum District/Hermann Park is the area of Main Street that Bob Hope once called “one of the most beautiful places in the world.” The 445-acre Hermann Park, originally created in 1914, borders the main campuses of Texas Medical Center and Rice University. Located in the park are Hermann Park Golf Course, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Houston Zoo, and Houston Museum of Natural Science. Nine additional museums are situated to its north and west (see page 000). This lovely area serves as the aesthetic focal point for the neighboring communities of Third Ward, Midtown, University Place, and Montrose. In addition to many houses of worship, hotels, banks, and health care facilities, the area is also experiencing a dramatic increase in residential development.

The Museum District and Hermann Park welcome more than six million visitors annually. Many visitors are neighbors who live in richly diverse communities around the park; others are families and school children from the greater Houston region; still others are tourists from throughout Texas and the world.

Strong plans are guiding the restoration and renewal of Hermann Park and efforts to strengthen the identity of the Museum District. A partnership between the Friends of Hermann Park and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department is implementing the Hermann Park plan, and the Houston Museum District Association coordinates among its members. The area is also flanked by, and to some degree overlaps, the Midtown and the Old Spanish Trail/Almeda Corridors TIRZs. The major projects proposed and implemented by individual institutions, such as the new Audrey Jones Beck Building of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, have significantly reshaped the area.

There is general agreement about many goals for the area: preserve and plant more trees; attract cafés, restaurants, street vendors, and retail stores; mitigate parking and traffic problems; improve local and commuter access through wayfinding systems and new transit options; create a dramatic arrival point at the planned Southwest Freeway exit ramp at Main Street; enhance the safety, convenience, and attractiveness of the pedestrian environment; and preserve and build upon the legacies of art, history, and natural beauty. The proposed light rail line offers special opportunities for station design that features public art and complements the surroundings. Finally, the Museum District encourages new cultural and educational institutions to locate in the area to further enrich the variety of offerings.



Sam Houston Statue in Hermann Park

CHALLENGES IN GREATER THIRD WARD AREA

Greater Third Ward is located immediately adjacent to Downtown, Midtown, the Museum District / Hermann Park area, and Texas Medical Center - but revitalization efforts in these areas have not necessarily translated to beneficial impacts to adjacent communities. A purposeful, concentrated effort to include the Greater Third Ward in revitalization is needed to make a significant difference for its neighborhoods.

Greater Third Ward is a richly diverse community encompassing the original Third Ward neighborhood and 11 additional neighborhoods. It is often defined to include the Texas Medical Center, Hermann Park, and the Museum District. The area most closely associated with the Main Street Corridor - between the Museum District and the Wheeler-US 59 Crossover - is characterized as mixed use. It includes a variety of housing types. Because housing conditions vary, one of the community's greatest concerns is the need to stop further deterioration of housing.



HARC Center for Global Studies

Project Row Houses on Holman Street, Third Ward

The Third Ward Redevelopment Council, formed in 1991, is working to redevelop Greater Third Ward through efforts in housing, neighborhood reclamation, entrepreneurship, economic development, infrastructure improvement, expanding the tax base, and community services. Community support for this effort is diverse and wide, including grassroots leaders and the presidents of Texas Southern University, University of Houston, and Texas Medical Center. The Old Spanish Trail / Alameda Corridors TIRZ is a key factor in spurring the redevelopment of these important commercial corridors. Since Alameda is an important alternate route to Main and Fannin streets, the manner in which redevelopment occurs on these north-south routes requires coordination and consideration of the various interests in the area.

CHALLENGES IN MIDTOWN AREA

The area known as Midtown began as Houston's most beautiful neighborhood as residential development spread south along Main Street. First cotton, then oil was the basis for economic development in Houston that helped shape the prosperity evident in the development that occurred years ago along Main Street.



Hall Barnum Hughes Architects

Rendering of Midrise Development Proposed for Midtown

Beginning in the 1950s, construction of the freeway system and other technological changes encouraged the rapid suburbanization of Houston. The decline of Midtown was exacerbated by a ten-year moratorium on new sewer connections in Midtown beginning in 1976, followed by an economic downturn. In spite of these setbacks, Midtown retained solid assets. Its location gives residents and businesses easy access to two major employment centers. Important institutions, such as Houston Community College, and major businesses remained in the area. A flourishing Asian-American business community developed over the past two decades, providing much of the small business base for current development.

By 1992, the Midtown Redevelopment Association was established to attract middle-income households into livable neighborhoods in Midtown. Landscaped and rebuilt sidewalks would encourage the use of public transportation and foot traffic for easy walks to work, school, shopping, recreation, and home.

The Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) and the Midtown Redevelopment Authority were organized in 1995 under the authority of the City of Houston and with the participation of Harris County and Houston Independent School District. The Midtown TIRZ assists private development by reimbursing some improvements to the public right-of-way such as landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, and utilities. When private development projects underway as of January 2000 are completed, about \$300 million of new improved real estate value will have been added since 1995.

As redevelopment in Midtown gained momentum, the focus of the Midtown TIRZ shifted from simply inducing development to guiding development. Through planning, capital improvement, and the proposed use of land use regulation, stakeholders hope to realize a higher quality of new development. Capital improvement projects are being designed to ensure that important thoroughfares, such as Fannin, San Jacinto, Milam and Travis streets, appropriately balance the interests of traffic flow with the needs of residences and businesses in Midtown. Lighting and other projects are underway to improve the pedestrian environment. To discourage incompatible development, the TIRZ is also working on a plan for land use regulations and controls.

The Midtown Management District was organized in 2000 as a taxing authority quite similar to the Houston Downtown Management District. Its initial priorities are signage/gateway enhancements to more effectively designate the neighborhood and developing a security plan, including a storefront police station located in a central Main Street facility and 24-hour patrols using cars and bikes.

The area's future agenda includes the unsightly transition areas at the Pierce Elevated and at the Southwest Freeway, and the next four years of street and light rail construction through Midtown. Furthermore, high value redevelopment threatens the preservation of existing "pioneer" businesses such as the flower market strip on Fannin Street and jewelers, grocers, and restaurants on Milam Street.

CHALLENGES IN DOWNTOWN AREA



George O. Jackson

View of Downtown Houston

Downtown seems to be gaining a new identity - an upscale destination with unique features. The combination of historic and contemporary architecture, crowds both young and old, and restaurants, clubs, and theatres with international and domestic flavor all give Downtown an edge that just cannot be duplicated elsewhere in the city.

Downtown Houston, where about 145,000 people work, is home to unique and essential elements of Houston. The Theater District and Warehouse District include many artistic attractions. The Main Street Market Square Historic District is being reinvigorated by the Cotswold 2000 project and the modernization of historic structures to accommodate residential and commercial development trends. Key public facilities include the University of Houston-Downtown campus, the George R. Brown Convention Center (attracting one million visits annually), the Enron Field baseball stadium (seating over 40,000), and several city, county, and federal government complexes.

Traditionally grand Main Street is in transition Downtown. In a holding pattern since the 1970s, as one transit plan after another envisioned reconstruction, the street today feels decayed after years of heavy bus transit activity. Adjacent properties are undergoing dramatic change. Anticipating first the proposed transit street and now light rail, many structures are in renewal. New uses include lofts and apartments, hotels, offices, and entertainment retail. Major retailers are now beginning to look again at the former heart of Houston shopping.

As Main Street has and will remain the signature Downtown street, it is important that the quality of the street and sidewalk environment befit the adjacent architectural excellence. Designs for reconstruction of the street for light rail must accommodate this redevelopment. Construction impacts must be mitigated as once largely vacant buildings become fully occupied. Transit patron, pedestrian, vehicular and service access must be provided. Supporting utility infrastructure should well serve residents and businesses.

The METRO Transit Streets program, Cotswold, Downtown District, and Main Street Market Square Redevelopment Authority capital improvements programs are improving many crossing and adjacent streets. Improvements to Buffalo Bayou are under construction at Allen's Landing. These and other ongoing projects need to be coordinated with Main Street reconstruction. Furthermore, streets not addressed by these programs will need attention in later years.

Downtown comes together to solve problems through several nonprofit and governmental organizations. Central Houston, Inc. and Houston Downtown Management District provide planning, economic development, construction, and operating capacity. The Main Street Market Square Redevelopment Authority provides infrastructure financing and assistance to private development through reimbursement for public improvements such as landscaping, sidewalks, utilities, and preservation of historic façades. Buffalo Bayou Partnership provides a design and planning overseer capacity for waterfront redevelopment including Allen's Landing. The Downtown Historic District is the advocate for historic preservation and economic development for the Main Street Market Square Historic District as well as other historic areas of the north end of Downtown.

CHALLENGES IN NEAR NORTHSIDE AREA

Near Northside is one of the older neighborhoods in Houston, and includes mixed areas of vacant land, industrial, residential, and commercial uses. The area is home to a number of schools and social service agencies such as the Thomas Street Aids Clinic, housed in the old Southern Pacific Railroad hospital, and La Nueva Casa de Amigos Health Center. The area has not experienced significant growth or development in the last decade. The population of this area is relatively large compared to other neighborhoods with easy access to the planned light rail corridor, and it includes much of the Hispanic population with the potential for early benefits from light rail service.



La Nueva Casa de Amigos Health Care Center at North Main and Hogan

IV. Redevelopment Strategies

The redevelopment strategies for the Main Street Corridor emphasize coordination and guidelines, rather than regulation, to effect redevelopment. Emerging changes in mobility patterns create an opportunity to re-establish the Corridor as a link to economic and social vitality. The Main Street Coalition's objective of integrating land-use with transit planning can create an alternative to characteristically low-density development in a pedestrian-friendly corridor unique to Houston with increased access to jobs and services.



View of Baldwin Park, Midtown (live-work lofts)

This redevelopment approach, as described in the *Master Plan for the Main Street Corridor*, is demonstrated through corridor-wide implementation strategies, as well as in projects specific to areas of the Corridor. The creation and continuous adjustment and updating of actions and plans to implement the redevelopment strategies will be a major coordination and management tool for the near and long term.

- Encourage the completion of public projects underway on Main Street.
- Adopt Main Street Corridor Design Guidelines for the public right-of-way.
- Enhance Main Street and the light rail alignment to create an integrated corridor.
- Link adjacent neighborhoods to the Corridor with high-quality pedestrian districts.
- Attract high-impact joint-use development with regional parking facilities.
- Examine long-term redevelopment projects in key areas of the Corridor.
- Establish continuous support for the Main Street Coalition's vision to ensure the facilitation and coordination of public and private projects along the Corridor.

STRATEGY:

Encourage the completion of public projects underway on Main Street.

Several major projects are underway along the Main Street corridor in various stages of implementation and require only sustained effort to ensure that funding and construction plans continue to have public support. METRO Light Rail, Cotswold, the Downtown “Superstop,” the Downtown Transit Center, the Transit Streets projects, Allen’s Landing, the Southwest Freeway Reconstruction with an enhanced off-ramp, major flood control projects, and the South Main Street Enhancement Project are critical infrastructure projects that signal Main Street’s transformation into a signature corridor.

METRO LIGHT RAIL

In 1999, the Metropolitan Transit Authority selected light rail as the preferred option for meeting future transit demand in the Main Street high capacity transit corridor. The Coalition has supported and advocated for METRO’s light rail initiative that will serve to link existing venues as well as new developments along the Corridor. In addition to the upgrade in the quality and image of public transportation, the benefits of light rail would be expensive or impossible to replicate using other strategies.

- Light rail will create the opportunity to establish new parking facilities that provide off-site parking linkages to serve destinations from Reliant Park to Downtown.
- Light rail will create economic development as a major attribute to the success of new venues and expansions of existing office and entertainment complexes. Major events such as the Super Bowl, Olympic bids, and conventions will be served and enhanced by light rail.
- Light rail will attract new housing to Midtown and other inner loop neighborhoods; many of these residents will be employed at destinations served by light rail. Many would otherwise be using private vehicles to commute, contributing to traffic congestion.
- Light rail will be a critical link to the regional mobility system, establishing a multimodal transportation distribution system. Furthermore, use of light rail in this capacity will eliminate bus trips, reducing noise and pollution, and provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment for surrounding communities.



Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County

Rendering of Light Rail Station at McGowen and Main, Midtown

The use of light rail will depend on more than tracks and vehicles; it will be impacted by the quality and convenience of the surrounding pedestrian environment and development projects. These aspects of the light rail initiative have been appropriately emphasized by METRO during the planning process. As METRO rebuilds the Main Street Corridor to serve both vehicles and light rail, the highest level of support for the simultaneous construction of a high-quality corridor must be funded and carried through in close coordination with key stakeholders.

COTSWOLD

The most extensive pedestrian district enhancement in the history of Houston is underway — Cotswold sets an important standard for future efforts to create high-quality pedestrian districts along the Main Street Corridor. Cotswold 2000 is a \$58 million, 97-block neighborhood improvement project highlighting the historic heart of Houston around Market Square and Houston's old courthouse, and linking the Theater District to Enron Field. The project includes:

- an asphalt overlay to streets;
- new utilities;
- upgrades to sidewalks;
- new streetlights;
- new wayfinding information;
- street furniture such as benches and shelters;
- public art;
- hundreds of trees; and
- approximately 1,000 new metered parking spaces, with diagonal parking on some streets.

In addition to the high-quality environment for pedestrians and vehicles destined for Downtown, Cotswold is a model for the implementation of public right-of-way enhancement projects. The City of Houston initially funded the project with certificates of obligation, and as construction progresses the City is realizing a profit from parking revenues that will be sufficient to ultimately cover all construction costs and retire all debt that the City incurs. The City hired the Houston Downtown Management District to manage the project, ensuring the involvement of Downtown stakeholders.

The project is well underway, with construction completed in two areas of Phase I. The design of Phase II begins in fall 2000. Beneath the new streets and sidewalks lies an amazing network of cables, water lines, electrical lines, and many different kinds of road topping including historical brick. Utility tunnels, pedestrian tunnels, and abandoned basements create unique challenges to this signature project.



Detail from Cotswold Plan

DOWNTOWN “SUPERSTOP”

Another example of infrastructure development favored by the Main Street Coalition is the Transit to Tunnel “Superstop.” The project is located on Main Street, surrounded by Lamar, McKinney, and Milam streets. A private developer is cooperating with the Houston Downtown Management District and METRO to combine a new office tower with covered bus stops, easy connections to the pedestrian tunnel system, and ground-level retail space.



*Rendering of Air Rights Office Tower Development
at Superstop on Main Street at McKinney*

Since the “Superstop” is centered within the downtown tunnel system and at what may become the busiest light rail station in Downtown, this planned mixed-use destination could be a prototype for private development at light rail stations throughout the Corridor.

DOWNTOWN TRANSIT CENTER

The Downtown Transit Center, a bus and rail linkage facility that will be located on Main Street next to the Pierce Elevated, promises to attract significant transit-friendly development to the Main Street Corridor. METRO is building its new headquarters building on the site and, with a light rail station and extensive bus service, promises to be among the best-served areas of the city in terms of public transportation. The Main Street Coalition is working with METRO to ensure that the facility is designed to accommodate this vision within its budget and timeframe.

ALLEN'S LANDING

Main Street connects Houston to its most vital history, and no project better demonstrates the importance of reestablishing that connection than the Allen's Landing redevelopment effort. Several projects are coming together to provide access, historic interpretation, and recreational opportunities at the site where Houston began in 1836.



Main Street Bridge over Buffalo Bayou Circa 1900

The \$3.2 million redevelopment of Allen's Landing also demonstrates shared funding - another important component of the Coalition's strategy for funding redevelopment efforts along the Main Street Corridor. Funding commitments for Allen's Landing include the City of Houston, Harris County Flood Control District, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and private funds raised by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership. A comprehensive master plan is being developed to leverage the more than \$25 million in projects taking place in the greater Allen's Landing area.

TRANSIT STREETS

METRO's five-year, \$200 million Downtown / Midtown Transit Streets Project is rebuilding about 30 miles of streets with reinforced concrete lanes, widened sidewalks, and a new underground traffic signal interconnection system. Less visible, but no less important, are upgrades to underground utilities funded by the City of Houston, including new water mains, sanitary sewers, and stormwater drains. A similar project is underway in the Texas Medical Center.

The Houston Downtown Management District has provided funds to enhance the project with upgrades to sidewalks, new streetlights, new wayfinding, trees, and additional street furniture such as benches and bus shelters. The Transit Streets Program demonstrates the importance of enhancing the pedestrian environment to support higher use of public transportation and complementary development.



METRO Trolley on St. Joseph Parkway

As the Transit Streets Program is completed, the upgrades should be extended to improve the streetscape in areas of Downtown and Midtown that were not provided with enhancements. Existing design standards, developed with input from stakeholders, should be implemented to create continuous, high-quality pedestrian connections to the east and west of Main Street.

SOUTHWEST FREEWAY RECONSTRUCTION

Just as Allen's Landing provides a gateway to Houston's historic transportation system - the bayous - the new freeway ramp at Main Street and the US 59 Southwest Freeway is a gateway to a modern-era transportation system that has also shaped Houston. The Main Street Coalition anticipates that the new ramp will provide more convenient access for many Houstonians to the Museum District, Midtown, and the Texas Medical Center.

The Coalition is particularly interested in two design aspects of the new freeway ramp - creating a feature element using the stormwater detention facility alongside the ramp and establishing an effective link between the exit and the light rail station to be built just to the north at Wheeler Street. These important public infrastructure projects must be designed with consideration for the intangible impacts of beautification and the convenience of intermodal linkages.

MAJOR FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS

The Harris County Flood Control District is implementing a \$225 million flood damage reduction plan for the Brays Bayou Federal Flood Control Project, and has made significant progress in a similar study of White Oak Bayou. Features of the Brays Bayou plan that would directly affect the Main Street Corridor include six bridge replacements and widening of both sides of the bayou channel.

Flood control is critical to the future success of the South Main Street area - both public and private projects should be designed to ensure that they do not increase the risk of flooding. Implementation of the district's plan for Brays Bayou, attention to design of all projects, and development of a plan for the Harris Gully tributary will ensure the confidence of developers, residents, and employers along the Main Street Corridor in the value of their investments.

SOUTH MAIN STREET ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The South Main Street Enhancement Project represents the first tangible success of the Main Street Coalition in its pursuit of financial support to create a signature street. The project will restore the historic vision for Main Street as a tree-lined boulevard with wide, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks.

The Main Street Coalition successfully sponsored an application for a \$2.4 million Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program project to supplement a TxDOT reconstruction project on South Main Street. TxDOT is reconstructing and widening 1.4 miles of South Main Street between Kirby Drive and the I-610 South Loop. Without supplemental funds, the TxDOT reconstruction would have been limited to standard street and sidewalk amenities. With the new funds, the TxDOT project will now include approximately 600 trees, beautification of the center median, and improved pedestrian amenities.

The Main Street Coalition embraced wide community involvement to develop the South Main Street Enhancement Project. The final application to TxDOT included 30 letters of support from government leaders, neighborhood organizations and residents, area institutions and businesses, and civic organizations.



Reconstruction of South Main Street Being Implemented by the Texas Department of Transportation

STRATEGY:

Adopt Main Street Corridor Design Guidelines for the public right-of-way.

The City should adopt design standards for a “Main Street Corridor Design District” to regulate the appearance of the public right-of-way. In addition, private development guidelines can be established through the authority of the Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone and other public/private partnership initiatives along the Corridor to ensure a quality of private development that is consistent with the public investment in infrastructure. Both the design standards and the private development guidelines should provide for the integration of civic art enhancements.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Development guidelines, established for specific districts along the Main Street Corridor, are needed to attract developers who favor controls as a means of protecting their significant investment in a higher-quality environment. A development guideline approach is less concerned with specific land uses, and targeted more towards building heights, setbacks, materials, open space character, and other aspects that are clearly related to the public environment.

The Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) is a potential vehicle for adopting development guidelines on Main Street from the Pierce Elevated to Palm Street. As required by state law, the Houston City Council would need to authorize any such regulations.

The Texas Medical Center has restrictive covenants and architectural standards regarding land use. By contrast, some areas such as the Museum District and South Main Street from Holcombe Boulevard to Loop 610 have no formal district structure. However, high quality design may be embraced voluntarily; approximately 40% of the property frontage facing on Main Street is currently owned by or pending potential purchase by non-profit institutions and governmental entities — all of whom are active with the Main Street Coalition.

City ordinance provides for the formation of scenic districts to prevent new billboards, provide stronger size restrictions for on-premise signs, and acceleration of the phase-out of non-conforming billboards and on-premise signs. From the time that it was first built, State Highway 288 has been a scenic district corridor. The Gateway 59 Scenic District, recently created by City Council, protects the US 59 Southwest Freeway corridor from I-610 West Loop to State Highway 288, including the Main Street Corridor from the Pierce Elevated to Hermann Park.

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

The public right-of-way along Main Street and certain adjacent blocks should be built and maintained to a high standard, without precluding individual expression within each district. A structured system of coordination among City, County, and METRO departments with the input of the Coalition and its stakeholders should create, implement, and maintain the design standards.

In addition to the METRO standards for light rail infrastructure and station criteria currently under development, one standard of lighting, paving, signage, and street furniture for Main Street and certain adjacent blocks should be established, without precluding individual expression within each district. To reduce traffic congestion and promote a high-quality street environment, regulations should discourage parking lots, parking structure frontages, and curb cuts along selected sections of Main Street. Guiding vehicle entrances and parking facilities to side streets will enhance safety and create predictability for drivers.



US 59 Southwest Freeway Overpass at Main Street

Designs for light rail stations, streetscape elements (e.g., lighting), and other specific amenities and infrastructure details should reflect full community participation in the decision-making process by residents, neighborhood organizations, and the business community including small and minority businesses.

INCORPORATING PUBLIC ART

The best way to artistically enhance the Main Street Corridor and its unique public spaces is to integrate artists into the design phase of each project so that public art can be incorporated into the construction phase with little or no additional cost. Art is not simply an object, but quite often an innovative solution to a design problem.

Civic art is not just art in public places; it is the art of making places public. The Master Plan calls for art to be incorporated into the Main Street Corridor in four specific ways.

- Plazas and squares — fountains, shading, and landscaping
- Street furniture — lighting, benches, and banners
- Bayou crossings — lighting, markers, and other elements to reconnect Houston to its bayous
- Gateways — one-of-a-kind art elements or collaborations



HARC Center for Global Studies

Mural by Suzanne Sellers on the Side of Treebeard's Restaurant in Market Square, Facing Preston

In addition, the design of freeway architecture with its massive influence on street life is a critical component. The Texas Department of Transportation should build on the recommendations of the Green Ribbon Report it commissioned, with a focus on improving the freeway crossings and connections on Main Street.

The Coalition will collaborate with the Cultural Arts Council of Houston and Harris County (CACHH) to promote these methods of integrating public art into the Corridor. With the assistance of CACHH, implementing entities should maximize the impact of existing requirements to incorporate art into construction projects and identify additional incentives for the addition of civic art.

STRATEGY:

Enhance Main Street and the light rail alignment to create an integrated corridor.

To create exciting station areas and streetscape amenities on Main Street and along the light rail line where it departs from Main Street, the Coalition recommends investments in trees, fountains, other aesthetic enhancements, and pedestrian enhancements such as sidewalks, lighting, and other features of street furniture. The Master Plan identifies three “implementation districts” for investments in Downtown, Midtown, and the Museum District.



Rendering of Prototype Light Rail Station

LIGHT RAIL STATION AREAS

To make light rail transit as pedestrian-friendly as possible, the Coalition’s vision for light rail stations is to treat them as an extension of the sidewalk. Additional funding is being sought to enhance the sidewalks, streets, and stations as a part of light rail construction. This approach is most critical in those areas of Downtown, Midtown, and the Texas Medical Center where stations are planned for the center of the street.

Design of the light rail system should be integrated into the streetscape. In Downtown, special paving should be designed to run from property line to property line, providing a continuity of materials throughout the streetscape. Where no station is present, the esplanade should contain landscaping and water elements that are consistent with sidewalk landscaping and do not interfere with light rail.

MAIN STREET LANDSCAPING

Conceived as a magnificent garden boulevard, the revitalized Main Street Corridor will build on Houston's heritage of great tree-lined streets and landscaped esplanades. One of the most beautiful urban environments in Houston is the stretch of Main Street along the Museum District, Hermann Park, Rice University, and the Texas Medical Center. As described earlier (see page 000), the South Main enhancement project will extend this environment to the South Loop. Besides providing shade, the formal rows of grand live oak trees arching over Main Street reinforce the edges of the street and buffer pedestrians and adjacent land uses from automobile traffic.

About 6,000 new trees should be planted along the Main Street Corridor at an estimated cost of \$15 million. This cost estimate includes installation costs such as removing pavement, installing irrigation, and providing protective tree grates. The Master Plan calls for extending the tree canopy by adding:

- 1,000 new live oak trees on Main Street, with most needed for Midtown,
- 4,000 live oak trees on adjacent streets along the Corridor, and
- 1,000 additional trees of various species along the Corridor.

Furthermore, long-term redevelopment projects could add thousands of additional trees to new parks and streets that connect the Corridor to adjacent neighborhoods.



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Main Street Master Plan Showing "Church Square" with the Proposed Site for the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and a "Flower Market" at the Wheeler/Blodgett Light Rail Station

CORRIDOR STREETSCAPE PRINCIPLES

Main Street should be enhanced by restoring esplanades along the street and by discouraging curb cuts and parking structures. Along the light rail alignment, landscaped esplanades should alternate with station platforms to create a variety of scenic and public uses of the center area. South of Wheeler, the esplanade should continue as far as is practical in length to beautify the street and provide a safe respite for people crossing the street.

Although curb cuts and parking structures are to be discouraged along Main Street, on-street parking along Main Street and particularly along side streets should be encouraged. New wayfinding should be added to Main Street on a scale comparable to that of the new system being installed Downtown.

The Main Street Corridor streetscape principles can be implemented for about \$60 million, not including special projects. The Master Plan includes special details to address the conditions in three key "implementation districts": Downtown, Midtown, and the Museum District.

DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE CHALLENGES

Downtown presents unique challenges to the design vision for the Main Street Corridor, including areas with special historic character, existing infrastructure constraints, and an interest in highlighting the importance of Downtown as the central gathering place for Houston. Stakeholders have identified a number of ways to meet these challenges through artistic adaptations of the Main Street vision.



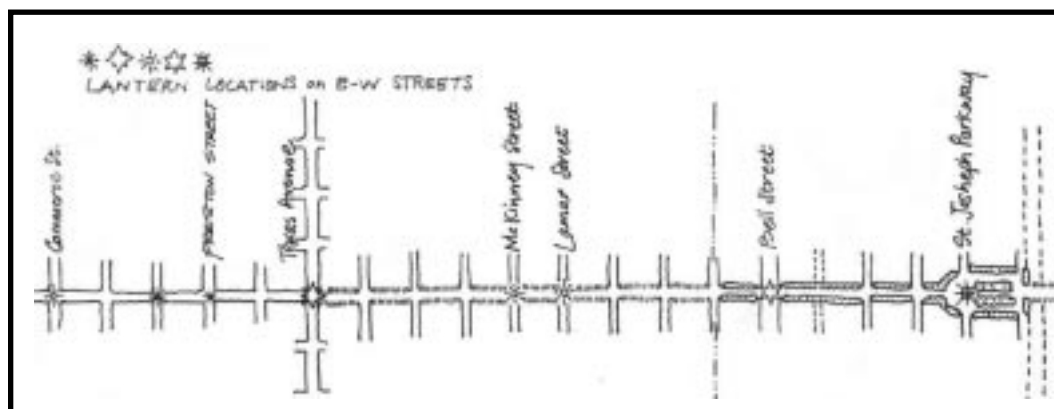
Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Conceptual Rendering of Main Street

The Cotswold 2000 project, discussed above, is an alternative approach to the Main Street Corridor streetscape that fits with the historic character of the district. Although the streetscape will lack trees, the use of other artistic enhancements will create an inviting pedestrian atmosphere.

The most significant infrastructure constraint along Main Street is the presence of basement vaults under the sidewalks along much of Main Street in central Downtown. These basement vaults make it cost-prohibitive to plant large trees. Instead, stakeholders are exploring other landscaping and architectural approaches to provide shade and the experience of being in an urban garden.

Recognizing the importance of Downtown as the central gathering place for Houston, station areas and other major intersections should be enhanced. Specialty markers, such as lanterns or some other large artistic icon, may be suspended across the intersections so that they are visible from 2 to 3 blocks east and west of Main Street.



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Plan of Lantern Locations for Light Rail Line from Historic District to Cathedral Square

MIDTOWN STREETSCAPE FOCAL POINTS

The streetscape along Main Street in Midtown will be heavily influenced by development in three key areas. The Coalition and its stakeholders propose using public private partnerships to implement and enhance the Main Street Corridor streetscape design principles in these three areas.

The Midtown Redevelopment Authority's Superblock development is a proposed private, high-density, mixed-use development that would include rental apartments, retail, a large anchor grocery, office space, and integration of the planned light rail station at McGowen Street. Midtown owns a portion of the land and is seeking to include several private properties through negotiated acquisition by the private developer.



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Rendering of Light Rail Serving New Development in Midtown

Church Square (framed by the historic South Main Baptist Church), the anticipated new location for the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) and new mixed-use development, would be a park-like renewal to bring new public and private uses to a key stretch of Main Street with links to both Montrose and the Third Ward.

The Master Plan proposal for a Central Flower Market and new parking facility at the future Wheeler Street light rail station, discussed in a subsequent strategy, would extend the “Church Square” enhancements to the southern end of Midtown.

MUSEUM DISTRICT

The Museum District is already one of the loveliest areas in Houston and will soon be served by a light rail station at Binz Street, split between Fannin and San Jacinto streets, and a new exit ramp from the Southwest Freeway. Key goals for the Museum District are to:

- Enhance light rail stations, intersections, and information signs to complement the Museum District's identity;
- Create a dramatic gateway to the Museum District from the Southwest Freeway with an aesthetic treatment of area reserved for detention;
- Build a signature bridge for Montrose Boulevard; and
- Improve pedestrian and vehicular travel corridors that connect to Hermann Park, surrounding neighborhoods and the regional transportation system in ways that are inviting, convenient and safe.

The Master Plan encourages the location of new museums and cultural institutions in the area and calls for three special projects:

- "Church Row" on Main Street comprising a comprehensive system of opens spaces, lighting, paving, street furniture, events banners, public art and shared parking from Binz to Southmore;
- An "Art Walk" on Binz Street; and
- A major east-west connection from Main Street to Almeda via Southmore.

STRATEGY:

Link adjacent neighborhoods to the Corridor with high-quality pedestrian districts.

Critical linkages should be established connecting the Main Street Corridor east and west to adjacent neighborhoods and employment centers. The Coalition and its stakeholders should work with the City of Houston, Harris County, and METRO, using federal funds and other resources, to build high-quality pedestrian linkages, amenities, and other infrastructure to enhance districts all along the Corridor. In some areas, repairs and reconstruction of streets and utilities are needed to support a pedestrian-friendly environment.

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND ENTERTAINMENT LINKAGES

Main Street links together perhaps the highest concentration of employment, education, and entertainment destinations in Houston. Enhancing the pedestrian environment linking these destinations to Main Street will help make light rail, bus, and centralized parking facilities more attractive to people who are traveling to these destinations. The initial linkage improvements identified by the Coalition, as described below, are estimated to cost about \$30 million.



Children's Museum Sidewalk Along Binz Street

The Master Plan calls for an “Art Walk” that stretches from the art museums at Montrose Boulevard to the Children’s Museum at LaBranch Street. An inviting, art-oriented pedestrian environment would be created to encourage the use of transit and shared parking facilities, promote visits to more than one destination, and attract cafés and galleries as infill development. Major new features along the street would include a new open space to anchor the Children’s Museum and a new “Museum Square” between Binz and Calumet at Caroline, framed by commercial galleries and cafés. In addition to linking museums to Main Street, Binz connects neighborhoods served by the Almeda Corridor and State Highway 288, and Bissonnet links neighborhoods in University Place and West University.

Nearby, light rail stations will improve critical linkages to employment, entertainment and education activities in Hermann Park (including the Miller Outdoor Theatre, Houston Museum of Natural Science, and the Zoo) and at Rice University and Texas Medical Center (particularly through linkages to parking at the Smith Lands and planned South Loop facilities). A major planned enhancement for the Texas Medical Center is the Galen Transit Center.

Another high priority for public investment in the streetscape is the area near Houston Community College (HCC). Enhanced pedestrian walkways, landscaping, bus shelters, and other amenities should be targeted to this area because of its existing pedestrian traffic and a high potential for redevelopment activity. The project is to be designed in concert with the campus master plan that HCC plans to develop and with the planning activities of the Midtown Redevelopment Authority. The project will transform the area into a signature pedestrian district that will be safe and inviting at all hours for students, staff, and visitors to the area.



Proposed Houston Community College Project

A special emphasis in the Houston Community College area should be the design of a sidewalk and parking environment that is particularly convenient for students and staff with disabilities. The college's Central Campus includes a large number of people with disabilities. In addition to required elements such as wheelchair ramps at crosswalks, other enhancements could be provided, such as audible crosswalk signals and specially textured crosswalk pavement. Addressing such needs would have a positive impact on the community by creating a place with special attraction to a group with a strong existing anchor to the area.

Shared parking is a key element to creating exciting pedestrian-oriented districts. As demonstrated in the Rice Village, structured parking contained within retail structures helps make it practical to concentrate a high volume of activity in a small area. Consolidation of surface parking into structured parking facilities frees up land that can be developed into new destinations or residential projects, further enhancing the level of activity in the area. Thus, shared parking facilities should be moved forward in tandem with the streetscape enhancements envisioned for the “Art Walk” and Houston Community College areas.

The Coalition also supports pedestrian enhancements to Dallas and Walker streets, near the Downtown “Superstop.” Although less work is needed in this area than in the projects described above, the proposed project should help enhance pedestrian access to both bus, light rail, and retail services offered at the Downtown “Superstop.”

In Downtown, the ongoing Cotswold 2000 project should be reinforced by enhancing Market Square as a public market, perhaps with new pavilion-like structures and encouraging infill on vacant parcels with 3-5 story development using porches and verandahs to shade sidewalks, similar to The Rice mixed-use restoration project.



Outdoor Dining under Rice Hotel Portico at Main Street and Texas Avenue

Other employment, entertainment, and education linkages are included in this strategic plan, but as those linkage projects require additional strategic approaches to public and private investment they are described in subsequent sections.

NEIGHBORHOOD LINKAGES

In order to create a mixed-use, economically sound Main Street Corridor, more needs to be done to strengthen the linkages between the Corridor and adjacent neighborhoods. Residential areas along the Main Street Corridor already offer many housing types and price levels, and the composition of the Corridor's residents reflects many aspects of Houston's racial, ethnic, income, and age diversity. Establishing better linkages to these neighborhoods is estimated to cost about \$20 million.

Neighborhoods along the Corridor reflect a wide range of housing densities, as reflected by population density in the super neighborhood areas as defined by the City of Houston. Projected development in Midtown and Downtown is likely to result in higher density for those super neighborhoods, but other neighborhoods with relatively little vacant land are not likely to change as significantly over the next ten years.

One key linkage that should be established is to the Third Ward. A proposed enhancement of the pedestrian environment along Southmore will increase the convenience and safety of this important gateway to the Third Ward. Proposed enhancements to Wheeler Street and the area underneath US 59 between Fannin and Almeda streets would also provide convenient pedestrian areas within and accessible to Greater Third Ward. These pedestrian enhancements could be built in conjunction with a parking lot being studied by the Old Spanish Trail / Almeda Corridors TIRZ. Binz Street is another opportunity for a connection to the Third Ward.



Oakwood Apartments, Midtown

Another key linkage is the residential and mixed-use neighborhoods emerging on the eastern and western edges of Midtown. The Midtown Redevelopment Authority supports encouraging the new residents of these areas to walk; its targeted public investment in lighting and sidewalk enhancements should ultimately benefit businesses located in the district.

STREET AND UTILITY CONSTRUCTION

To support new development and avoid premature demolition of infrastructure enhancements, the Coalition supports further street and utility construction.

- Existing plans for street and utility construction should be reviewed. Where development opportunities exist that are impacted by any identified gaps in construction plans, the plans should be updated. Much of the Corridor will be enhanced through the Transit Streets program, which includes extensive utility upgrades. However, certain development projects may require upgrades to utilities that should be assisted through financing from the City and/or appropriate districts.
- Street resurfacing and utility repairs are needed in areas where there are isolated problems that could deter development activity.
- Sidewalk and street frontage reconstruction is needed in areas where the pedestrian environment has deteriorated to a significant degree. Full reconstruction to eight-foot sidewalks with high-quality lighting and landscaping should be the standard. Higher quality materials and additional amenities should be used along featured corridors, but are unnecessary on many streets.
- Sidewalk enhancement and upgrades of lighting, landscaping, and other amenities are needed in areas where the current infrastructure is functional but unattractive. For these areas, a case-by-case determination should be made as to how to supplement the existing infrastructure. For example, four-foot sidewalks can be widened to attractive eight-foot sidewalks with one or two brick strips.

Although further studies are needed, an estimated \$60 million in street and utility replacement, repairs, or enhancements are needed to support the revitalization of the Main Street Corridor. Following the approach described above, as each area of the Corridor is planned in detail, appropriate cost estimates may revise this figure significantly.

STRATEGY:

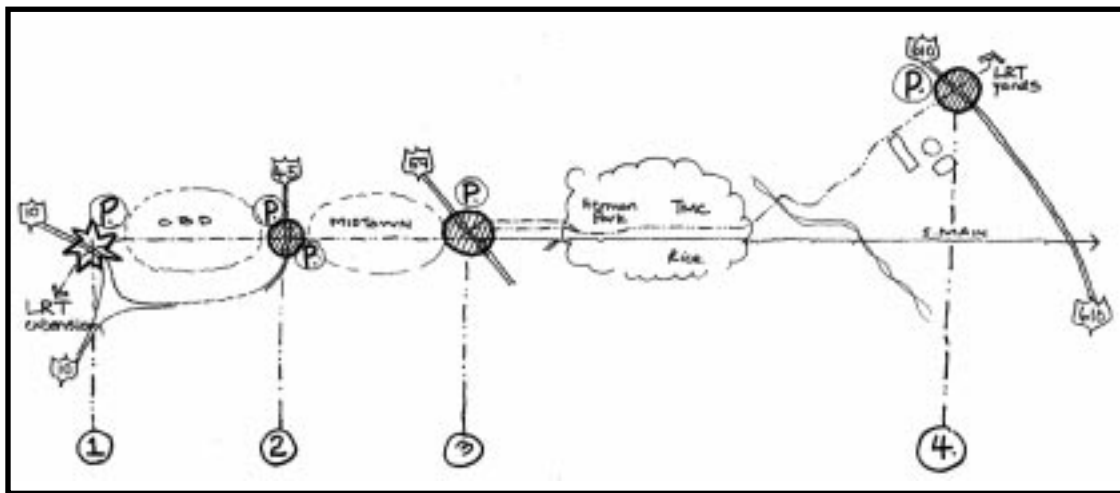
Enhance transit ridership and attract private development with parking facilities.

The Coalition and its stakeholders should work with the City of Houston, Harris County and METRO to identify feasible locations for transit-oriented parking facilities that would attract private development. Public investment in parking facilities to encourage and support private development should reduce traffic congestion and provide a revenue source for public improvements in the Corridor.

FREEWAY - LIGHT RAIL INTERFACE

Based on stakeholder input, the Coalition recommends an analysis of the feasibility of placing major regional parking resources at points where light rail intersects with a freeway, as well as other opportunities that may exist in the Corridor. These points will create a park-and-ride approach that will provide the convenience of accessibility to multiple destinations on a single trip and the efficiency of shared parking resources among many destinations. Furthermore, such parking development should be coordinated with private investment to enhance transit use.

The success of METRO's park-and-ride service for special events, such as the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo and baseball at Enron Field, demonstrates the market viability of this principle. In addition to the transit-parking linkage, public investment should encourage the involvement of partnerships that bring additional uses to each site. With parking and transit access guaranteed, private investors will have an incentive to design transit and pedestrian-friendly projects, both in terms of design and in terms of activities.



Linkages Among Transportation Modes, Activity Centers, and Parking

NORTH END REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION HUB

At the northern end of the light rail system, projects suggested in the Master Plan that could complement a parking facility include a new Amtrak station, METRO bus connections, regional bus connections, residential development, expansion of the University of Houston-Downtown and related facilities, and park space along White Oak Bayou. Together, these elements would create a regional transportation hub providing access to the Main Street Corridor to visitors from various parts of Texas.

PIERCE INTERMODAL CENTER

The Master Plan suggests that a parking facility located near the new Downtown Transit Center and convenient to the Pierce Elevated would maximize the convenience of transfer from automobile to transit. This access would enhance the value of associated private development in the area, as well as the long-term prospects for greater use of transit. A second proposed component of the project would be a featured site for a new Cathedral for the Diocese of Galveston-Houston.

SOUTHWEST FREEWAY

Centrally located on the light rail system, the Master Plan suggests that this parking facility would be accessible to southwest Houston when the new gateway exit at Main Street is completed, and could serve visitors to nearby destinations — the Museum District, the proposed Central Flower Market and areas of Midtown — as well as Downtown, the Texas Medical Center, and major events at Reliant Park. Implementation of this facility should help create a pedestrian-oriented character in the area, as envisioned in the proposal for a paseo-like “Latin Street” with intimate retail and restaurant uses.

SOUTH LOOP

METRO is planning a 1,500-space park-and-ride facility south of the loop, and the Master Plan recommends that it should be complemented by a parking facility at the Reliant Park light rail station. In addition to providing park-and-ride access at times, this facility should be designed to help reduce the need for on-site parking near Reliant Park facilities, freeing land for more active uses.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

Establishing a joint-use development strategy will require a unique approach at each feasible location. The following six elements could be combined in different ways to create a successful approach for each location.

- Federal transit funding — If local officials prioritize this initiative for federal funding, up to 80% of the cost of the transit-related portion of parking facilities may be paid for with federal funds.
- City leadership — The City of Houston operates several successful parking facilities that provide funding for important public activities. Similar funding and management strategies could be used for Main Street parking facilities.
- METRO joint development authority — METRO’s existing authority to invest in commercial, residential, industrial, or mixed-use developments that are undertaken in concert with transit facilities. Transit authorities in other cities have implemented this approach by establishing a nonprofit joint development entity in partnership with private developers.
- Private participation — The portion of each parking facility that benefits associated private development, as well as non-parking components of the projects such as retail, should be financed using private capital.
- Regional parking authority — New legal authority could create a parking implementation district to ensure that new parking resources are consistent with the objectives of plans for the Main Street Corridor.
- Tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZs) — TIRZs are another potential source of funding for parking facilities.

STRATEGY:

Examine long-term redevelopment projects in key areas of the Corridor.

The Coalition will work with appropriate stakeholders and city and county agencies to further define several conceptual projects to resolve major policy issues and develop cost estimates as these projects are fully crystallized. Among the conceptual projects recommended in the Master Plan are a signature arrival element and a street-and-block plan for North Main near the University of Houston-Downtown, a “diagonal boulevard” in the southern end of Downtown, conversion of Southwest Freeway Spur 527 into a parkway, a flower market structure in Midtown, a major plaza at Holcombe embracing both Main and Fannin, and a major water feature as a centerpiece of densification of the Reliant Park area. The Coalition will also participate in special projects, such as the proposed High School for the Performing and Visual Arts campus.

NEAR NORTH DISTRICT

With its significant amount of underdeveloped land, proximity to the University of Houston - Downtown and the Near Northside neighborhood, the section of Main Street north of Buffalo and White Oak bayous is a unique opportunity for several expansive projects. City and community leaders are working to identify economic development strategies to establish a long-term catalyst for area-wide redevelopment.

- Regional transit hub — A facility linking together light rail, Amtrak, buses, major freeways, and parking resources could serve the Main Street Corridor and the community at large.
- Signature arrival element — Often illustrated as “the world’s tallest tower” in conceptual drawings, this feature would establish a dramatic identity for the district and visually anchor the transition from Main Street to North Main Street.
- New street-and-block plan — New streets would connect the vacant and undeveloped parcels back to Main Street.
- White Oak Bayou enhancement — Landscape enhancements would draw the bayou further into the regional bayou park system.
- Pedestrian access — A stairway or some other access to the bayous from the Main Street Bridge, widened sidewalks on the bridge, and conversion of an abandoned rail bridge into a pedestrian footbridge would enhance pedestrian use of the area.

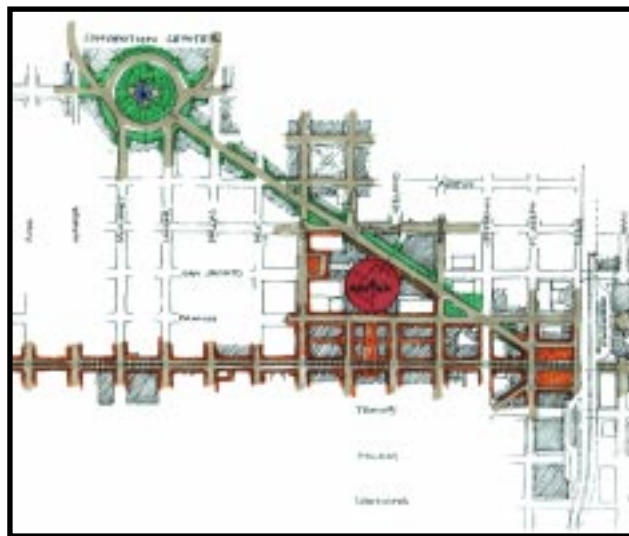


Near Northside Concepts, Main Street Master Plan

As a gateway to Downtown and the north neighborhoods, Main Street north of the bayous is a redevelopment opportunity. Regardless of whether these specific concepts are implemented, revitalization of this area is critical to the enhancement of Houston's image.

DIAGONAL BOULEVARD

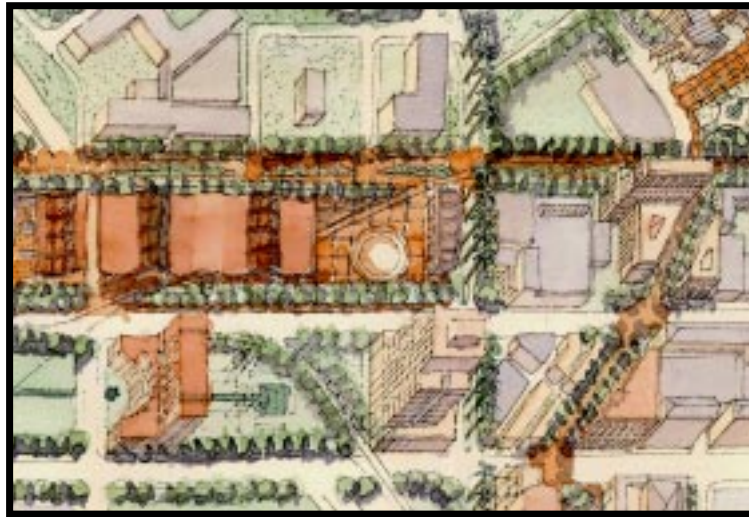
The relatively vacant landscape of the southeast quadrant of Downtown creates a unique opportunity for a complete transformation. A dramatic diagonal boulevard is proposed in the Master Plan, extending from the Pierce Elevated to the Convention Center, and anchored by significant public spaces at both ends. This prominent link between Main Street and the Convention Center would give the southeast quadrant its own special identity and open up new development opportunities. Regardless of whether this boulevard is built, a new direction in this sector of downtown is needed to take full advantage of the Downtown Transit Center and other redevelopment activities along Main Street.



Concepts for South End of Downtown, Main Street Master Plan

CENTRAL FLOWER MARKET

The existing Flower District on Fannin, which may be adversely affected by light rail and other development activity in the Midtown — Museum District area, could be drawn into the area surrounding the new light rail station at Wheeler Street. This site, spanning several blocks, would form the core of a revitalized district that could include a new paseo-like “Latin Street,” structured parking, and restored historic buildings including Sears and the Delman Theater. Immediate access to or from the US 59 Southwest Freeway with a major gateway at Main Street is another key feature of the area.



Concepts for “Central Flower Market” Area, Main Street Master Plan

The central feature of the project is envisioned as an active commercial area surrounding the light rail station, including boutiques, restaurants, and other establishments that preserve the flower market theme. Creating this redevelopment could cost about \$15 million, although key design decisions will significantly affect the cost. Regardless of the final plans, a close partnership between METRO, private developers, and the Texas Department of Transportation (which will be working on US 59 to the west of Main Street and adding a new exit ramp) is critical to create an economic asset for this area, rather than extending the blight that characterizes the area dominated by freeway architecture and heavy traffic.

SPUR 527 BOULEVARD

Phase II of the Southwest Freeway widening and renovation project, being constructed by TxDOT, will modify Spur 527. Area neighborhoods led by the Southwest Freeway Alternatives Project (SWAP) and the Master Plan call for a more aesthetic treatment to transform Spur 527 from blight into an amenity. In the tradition of Allen Parkway, one of Houston's most scenic areas, better aesthetic solutions are being explored to create a more attractive entrance to Downtown, permit better connections, and create a more scenic border between Midtown and Montrose.



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Concepts for Spur 527 Boulevard, Main Street Master Plan

HOLCOMBE STREET "GATEWAY PLAZA"

At the southern edge of the main campus of the Texas Medical Center, the concept of a new "Gateway Plaza" includes the idea of eliminating the grade-separated intersections at Fannin and Main. This approach would create new development opportunities for adjacent properties, establish a more favorable first impression for the Texas Medical Center, create a new gathering place for outdoor activities, and retain the existing below-grade right-of-way for light rail to alleviate traffic congestion above.

This proposal is intended to address an area along Holcombe between Fannin and Main streets, where pedestrian and vehicular circulation is difficult, if not dangerous. This area is unusual, because the internal orientation of the Texas Medical Center campus results in relatively little pedestrian circulation along street edges but lively internal passages between buildings.



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Concepts for Holcombe Street "Gateway Plaza," Main Street Master Plan

RELIANT PARK

Redevelopment of Reliant Park could establish a dramatic connection and new signature open space for Houston. The Harris County Sports and Convention Corporation, which manages Reliant Park, is moving forward to create a major gateway at Main Street with boulevard tree plantings and major water features for detention. This gateway is being coordinated with the South Main Enhancement Project, which is planting trees along South Main Street from Kirby to I-610 South Loop. The Master Plan calls for a new exposition park with a major water feature, significant development, and space to host major festivals and public parties. Incorporation of land between Main Street and Reliant Park into the sports complex will serve parking needs in the near term, address local flooding problems, and permit additional entertainment destination development in the future. The expansion of public and private investment in this area will help leverage the public investment in sports facilities to make this area a daily destination for the entire community.

A second proposal for this area is a new gateway streetscape program at the intersection of the I-610 South Loop and South Main Street. These and other concepts for the enhancement of the Reliant Park area will be studied to determine the potential for creating a new anchor and definition of urban living in Houston.



Concepts for South Main Parkway and Reliant Park Area, Main Street Master Plan

STRATEGY:

Establish continuous support for the Main Street Coalition's vision to ensure the facilitation and coordination of public and private projects along the Corridor.

The focus and impetus necessary to implement this Strategic Plan will require fundraising, communications, and coordination in the design and phasing of capital improvements. Moving forward may also entail an evolution in the roles and legal authority of the Coalition, its participant stakeholders, or new entities that may need to be created.

The Coalition is working within the framework of a diverse set of existing organizations with various missions, projects, powers, and priorities. Continuing this collaboration requires resources. Advancing the programs, projects, and policies recommended by the Coalition requires a thoughtful tapestry of roles, responsibilities, powers, and resources, including the functions listed below.

- Information exchange and the coordination of projects among governmental entities and the private sector is one of the most important benefits of the Coalition process and should be continued.
- Communication among stakeholders, area residents, businesses, civic organizations and the broader public has been initiated through several means including website, meetings, and newsletters. These tools should be evaluated in terms of goals, effectiveness, and resources.
- Project development, design, funding, and implementation may be accomplished by individual stakeholders such as METRO, the Midtown TIRZ or the Texas Medical Center, or may entail the formation of new entities altogether.
- Implementation of design goals and guidelines may be accomplished through a combination of changes in city ordinance, creating incentives, and direct implementation by participants.
- Fundraising is the most critical element and requires a continuing balance of private and public funding. The Main Street Coalition has taken the lead with governmental entities to secure public funding for these efforts. Making Main Street Happen, Inc. has had the role of securing private funding. A critical next step is an assessment of how these two funding efforts can be maximized and coordinated in the future.

The appropriate structure to implement each program, project, and policy should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis depending on its components and relevant locations. A variety of government agencies, existing districts (possibly with expanded authority), new districts, and private sector entities should be considered.



Main Street Coalition Board Meeting Reviewing Light Rail Plans

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COST ESTIMATES

In order to implement the revitalization of the Main Street Corridor, the Coalition recommends an initial commitment from several funding sources to a 20-year, \$200 million redevelopment plan. Some elements of the plan could not be included in the cost estimate because of major policy issues that affect their practicality and/or cost.

- **Main Street / Light Rail Streetscape:** \$60 million. High-quality pavement, lighting, and other amenities would be placed along the entire corridor, with initial funding focused on Downtown, Midtown, and the Museum District, and later phases emphasizing areas to the south of the Texas Medical Center.
- **Employment, Education, and Entertainment Linkages:** \$30 million. Initial priorities are the Binz Street “Art Walk,” Houston Community College, and the Downtown “Superstop.”
- **Neighborhood Linkages:** \$20 million. The initial focus should be towards the Third Ward and emerging mixed-use neighborhoods on the edges of Midtown.
- **Landscaping:** \$15 million. The Main Street Corridor would be beautified and shaded with thousands of new trees and other landscaping. The cost estimate includes installation costs such as removing pavement, installing irrigation, and providing protective tree grates.
- **Street and Utility Construction:** \$60 million. Where necessary to support new development, a coordinated program to repair, enhance, or replace existing infrastructure should be considered.
- **Central Flower Market:** \$15 million. As part of a station area plan for the Wheeler Street station, a retail development with flower shops, restaurants, and other uses could help retain the existing flower shops and other small businesses that are such an important characteristic of the Main Street Corridor.

The Coalition developed these cost estimates for planning purposes, based on conceptual project outlines as described in the Master Plan and reflecting local experience with similar projects. More accurate cost estimates will be developed on a project-by-project basis as they are moved into a preliminary design phase.



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Main Street Master Plan from “Bayou to Bayou”

FUNDING STRATEGY

The 20-year, \$200 million redevelopment plan for the Main Street Corridor includes three components.

- **\$80 million from local government.** An estimated \$80 million in local funds will be requested to implement the Main Street Master Plan. These funds could be provided through the capital improvement programs of the City of Houston, the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, Harris County, and METRO.
- **\$95 million from federal and state funds.** With a policy commitment by the City and METRO to prioritize Main Street in federal and state funding requests, approximately \$85 million in federal and \$10 million in state funds would be requested for implementation of the Main Street Master Plan over the next 20 years.
- **\$25 million in private, institutional, and philanthropic funds.** If local government demonstrates a commitment to create a signature Main Street and ensure its revitalization, the Coalition will request about \$30 million to support specific components of the Master Plan. Educational and non profit institutions located along the Corridor will be asked to fund about \$5 million in pedestrian and other infrastructure improvements that specifically benefit users of their facilities. About \$10 million in private capital will be sought to partially fund projects like a proposed central flower market. Philanthropic and corporate contributions will be asked to fund about \$10 million in trees, fountains, art, and other specific beautification elements.

This investment in Main Street will create a signature boulevard, benefiting the community by:

- Enhancing the viability of residential neighborhoods;
- Reinforcing the multi-billion dollar public and private investment boom in the inner city; and
- Attracting an estimated additional \$1 billion in further residential, retail, and office development to the Main Street Corridor.

The economic impact of the additional projected development will generate sufficient increased revenues to the City to more than offset project costs.

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

A combination of implementation mechanisms is needed for Main Street redevelopment. Options to be considered are:

- **Government programs** — Existing City, County, State, and METRO programs should implement many of the infrastructure improvements.
- **Existing districts** — Several districts, Downtown, Midtown, and The Texas Medical Center, have existing authority to obtain financing, establish development guidelines, and implement projects.
- **New districts and expanded authority for existing districts** — Some areas of the Corridor lack districts, and others lack districts with the authority to establish development guidelines.
- **Corridor-wide entity** — The existing Main Street Coalition can serve as a coordinating body, but should capital improvement funds be allocated on a district-wide basis, an entity with the authority to implement projects throughout the Corridor may be needed.
- **METRO joint development authority** — METRO has existing authority to invest in commercial, residential, industrial, or mixed-use developments that are undertaken in concert with transit facilities. Often this authority is exercised by establishing a nonprofit joint development entity in partnership with private developers.
- **City design standards** — The City of Houston may establish design standards for all improvements to city-owned public right-of-way.
- **Federal and state grants and loans** — As discussed in Appendix D, several federal and state funding sources are available to support the proposed improvements. Enhancements of the east-west linkages to neighborhoods, employment, educational, and entertainment resources along the Main Street Corridor would be particularly appropriate for such funds if the City and METRO make a policy commitment to this approach.
- **Land acquisition** — Where necessary to support joint development and street reconfiguration, land acquisition may be necessary. Necessary land acquisition can be done in partnership with property owners and developers to maximize the return of remaining parcels to existing property owners.

DOWNTOWN CONCEPTS



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Revitalized Streetscape with Light Rail



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Cathedral Square, Typical of New Plazas Proposed for Corridor

MIDTOWN CONCEPTS



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Mixed Use Retail, Office, and Residential



Revitalized Streetscape with Light Rail

MUSEUM DISTRICT CONCEPTS



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Fannin Street Light Rail at the Museum of Fine Arts



Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects

Pedestrian-friendly "Art Walk" from the Contemporary Arts Museum to the Children's Museum along Binz Street

SECTION APPENDIX A: MAIN STREET COALITION

Appendix A provides supplemental information on the various entities that have formed the Main Street Coalition.

MAIN STREET COALITION

The Main Street Coalition is a public-private partnership involving government agencies, nonprofit organizations, private companies, and individuals. The coalition is formally represented through a nonprofit 501(3)(c) organization called “The Main Street Coalition, Inc.” The coalition’s Board of Directors is made up of a cross section of Main Street stakeholders.

Under an agreement with the City of Houston, the Main Street Coalition agreed to prepare this strategic plan, taking into account stakeholder concerns, high-capacity transit, and building on existing and future development opportunities such as the Market Square Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, the Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ), the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) Major Investment Study (MIS), the Texas Department of Transportation South Main Street and Southwest Freeway improvements, and the Making Main Street Happen, Inc. design competition. To prepare the strategic plan, the Main Street Coalition conducted workshops, town hall meetings, and numerous informal meetings, as well as cooperating with activities sponsored under other auspices for the purpose of obtaining input into the process of developing a strategy for revitalizing the Main Street Corridor.

The Main Street Coalition is also responsible for identifying and preparing a plan for three to five viable transportation and/or land use pilot projects for the corridor based on stakeholder consensus and the vision for Main Street revitalization. These projects are mentioned in this strategic plan (further detail on these projects is provided in a separate report). The Main Street Coalition successfully nominated the first of these projects for the beautification and enhancement of South Main Street (US90A) for a \$2.4 million Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP) project. The Main Street Coalition is continuing to pursue its responsibility for identifying and applying for funding sources to support Main Street Corridor revitalization.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Of the many partners in the Main Street Coalition, four play a unique role as conveners of stakeholders within particular districts and neighborhoods. A fifth has played a unique role in creating a focus on urban design excellence, and the City of Houston Planning and Development Department is leading the effort to integrate land-use and transportation planning.

SOUTH MAIN CENTER ASSOCIATION (SMCA)

The South Main area represents one of the most vibrant and significant nonprofit communities in the nation. SMCA works to protect and enhance the area in which these institutions and neighborhoods change and grow. Among the institutions located in this thriving center of learning, culture, technology, and compassionate care are the Texas Medical Center and its 42 member institutions, Rice University, the Museum District, Hermann Park, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, and the Astrodome.

THIRD WARD REDEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Third Ward Redevelopment Council, formed in 1991, is working to redevelop Greater Third Ward in areas such as housing, neighborhood reclamation, entrepreneurship, economic development, infrastructure improvement, preserving/expanding tax base, and community services. Community support for this effort is diverse and wide, including grassroots leaders and the presidents of Texas Southern University, University of Houston, and Texas Medical Center.

MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Midtown Redevelopment Authority is the organization that conducts business for the Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone. Midtown's vision is to revive the original residential nature of the area with new construction and the preservation of historical structures. Its goal is to provide convenient, quality housing, vertically integrated with appropriate retail and commercial support facilities for employees of the Downtown/Central Business District and Texas Medical Center, college and medical students, and anyone who wants to live in the heart of Houston. The Midtown TIRZ can provide funding for necessary infrastructure, streetscape enhancement, schools, parks, and other recreation spaces. Midtown also has the ability to adopt land use controls similar to those available to suburban developers. Midtown Management District, a municipal management district, provides services to Midtown.

CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC./HOUSTON DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Central Houston and the Houston Downtown Management District serve as a catalyst for continuous, well-organized support of existing facilities and new development Downtown to assure conditions that are inviting for workers, residents, customers, users, visitors, and investors. Their goals are to advance downtown revitalization while stabilizing and improving building occupancies; make downtown clean, safe, convenient, understandable, comfortable, and inviting; and build support for Downtown revitalization including renewed development and stabilization and improvement of existing facilities. Central Houston is a membership organization, and the district is a municipal management district funded by an assessment on downtown properties. The Main Street Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone can provide infrastructure and other capital improvement funding.

MAKING MAIN STREET HAPPEN, INC. (MMSH)

MMSH is a private, nonprofit fund-raising entity whose mission is to facilitate, fund, and support the revitalization of Main Street into a signature corridor. Some of its specific goals are to encourage the highest level of design of streetscapes, parks, plazas, pedestrian walks, and public art; encourage the location of major educational and cultural institutions in the Main Street Corridor; and reinforce the historic character and special identity of the various areas and institutions within the corridor.

HOUSTON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

In partnership with the Main Street Coalition, the Planning and Development Department is guiding and supporting the Main Street Corridor Planning and Research Project, a multi-phased effort to create a signature corridor for Houston along the 8.5 mile stretch of Main Street between I-610 South Loop and Boundary Street. Support for this effort is provided in the form of technical assistance, research and grantsmanship.

In less than two years, the Department has garnered four grants totaling over \$2 million for planning and implementation projects along the corridor. The *Main Street Corridor Master Plan: Design Concepts for Main Street* is a major part of the first phase of the project. Other phases will focus on implementing projects described in the Master Plan and Strategic Plan and strengthening connections between Main Street and adjacent neighborhoods. While seeking additional federal funding for Main Street projects, the Planning Department continues to work closely with the Main Street Coalition to further the goal of transforming the Main Street Corridor into a vital transit and pedestrian-oriented corridor for the City.

SECTION APPENDIX B: MAIN STREET CORRIDOR PLANNING

Two major planning activities are underway for the Main Street Corridor. The *Main Street Corridor Master Plan: Design Concepts for Main Street* is a complementary effort to this Strategic Plan with a focus on urban design concepts. METRO is in the design phase for a light rail line from Downtown to Reliant Park, as well as other transportation-related planning activities.

MAIN STREET CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

The *Main Street Corridor Master Plan: Design Concepts for Main Street* offers bold ideas for creating a signature boulevard. Ehrenkrantz, Ekstut and Kuhn Architects of New York led the design effort that included extensive input from stakeholders throughout the corridor. The plan incorporates the Main Street Coalition's vision for Main Street as well as the goals of the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP), which funded the plan. It integrates regional transportation and transit plans, as well as existing and future development plans of METRO, Texas Medical Center, Midtown, Downtown, Reliant Park, and other areas. The Master Plan recommends eight over-arching principles "which form the framework for revitalization."

- **Everyone is on Main Street.** Strong linkages between development in the corridor and Main Street should be created such as grand gateways, public plazas and common landscaping.
- **A comprehensive corridor.** The development corridor is on both sides of Main Street, at least two blocks wide.
- **Landscape connections.** Throughout the corridor, landscape should be used to humanize the urban environment, link places together, help provide flood control, and reconnect Houston to its bayous.
- **Anchors at both ends.** The Northern and Southern most parts of Main Street respectively, could serve as areas for key anchors such as a regional transit hub or a great exposition park increasing the economic viability of the area and contributing to its attractiveness.
- **Parking resources at major intersections.** Where the light rail system intersects with freeways, significant new parking could serve the districts and promote ridership within the corridor- without dominating the view.
- **Higher density development.** The development plan promotes higher coverage, higher density, and mixed uses where most appropriate.
- **Enhanced public environment.** The emphasis of the plan is on the public environment - pedestrian-friendly streets, squares, esplanades, and street trees.
- **A sequence of urban districts.** Individual and multi-faceted districts throughout the corridor can be linked together with common attributes.

One of the key tenets of the Master Plan is that Main Street is much more than just a right-of-way; it is a series of districts. Each district has its own unique characteristics that can be built upon to maintain the diversity of the corridor and achieve the integration of land use, transit and pedestrian usage. While private land use decisions will remain with property owners and users, the changes that occur in public spaces will influence the choices they make - the streets and open spaces that link the various uses together in a manner that favors quality open space.

METRO TRANSIT PLANNING

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT

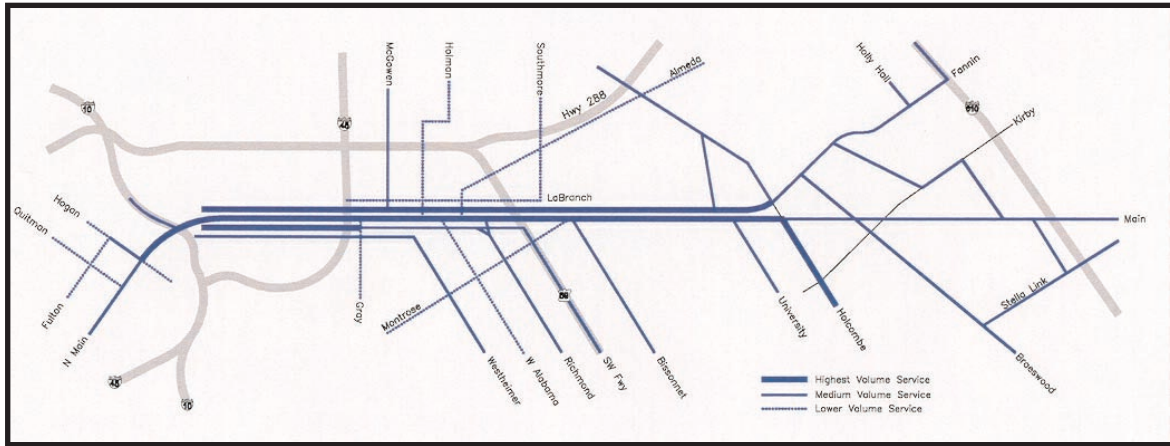
METRO conducted a Major Investment Study (MIS) of high-capacity transit alternatives for the Main Street Corridor to meet growing transit demand; generate new businesses, jobs, and housing; and provide a base for future transit development. The METRO Board selected light rail as the best alternative and began pre-engineering design work in March 2000. The \$300 million light rail project represents 7% of its ten-year transportation capital program.



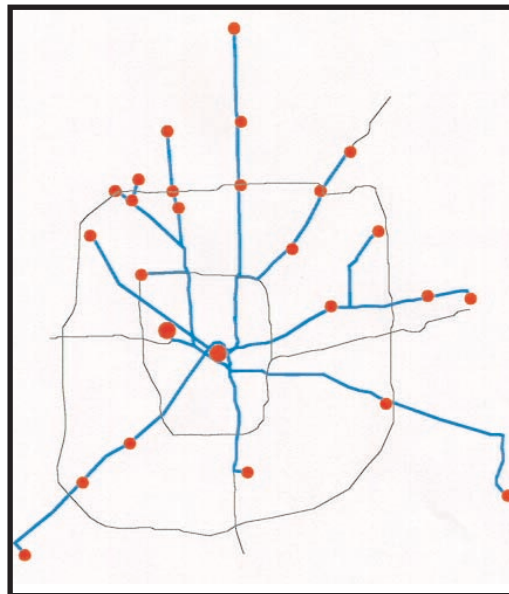
Preliminary Alignment for Light Rail System

FIXED-ROUTE BUSES AND TROLLEYS

The METRO Board adopted a long-range plan in 1996 identifying Downtown to Reliant Park as a high-capacity corridor. Fixed-route buses, both local and park-and-ride, handle about 340,000 boardings each weekday, including about 60,000 boardings on local buses operating in the portion of the corridor to the south of Downtown.

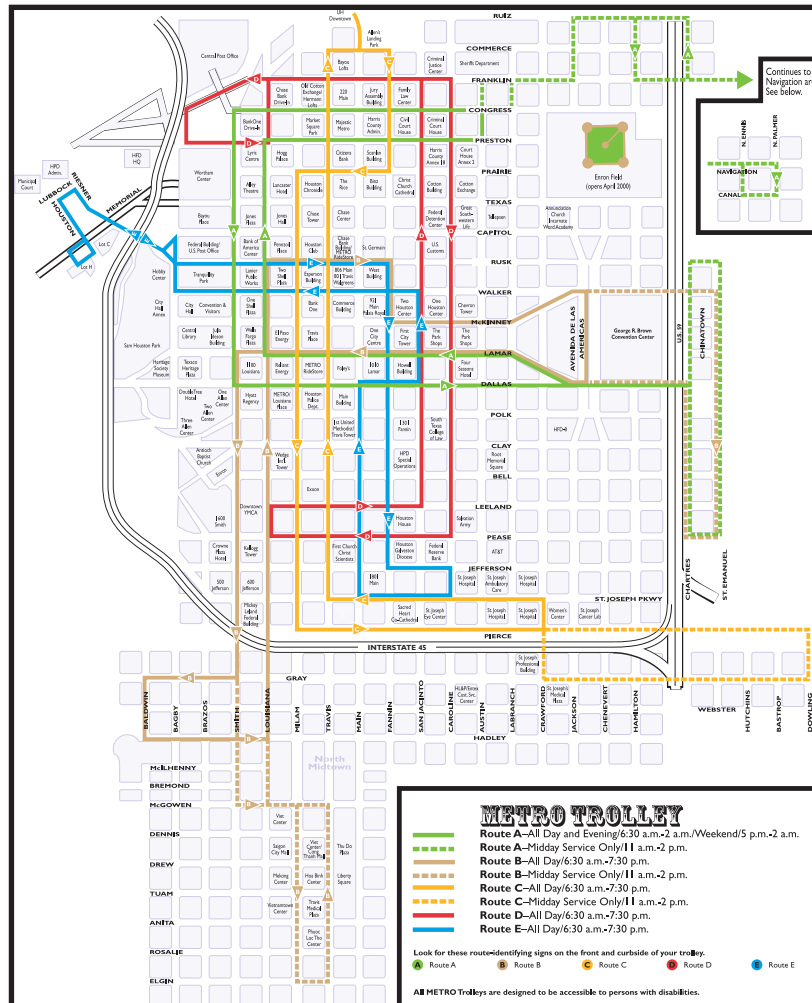


Current Local Bus System Operating Along the Main Street Corridor



Current Park-and-Ride Bus System Serving Destinations Along the Main Street Corridor

The newest METRO service is the Downtown trolley service, currently providing free service on five routes throughout the Central Business District. There are 37 red, green, yellow, and cream-colored trolley replicars brightening the Downtown streets. In the first year of service, the METRO trolley fleet carried more than 1.3 million boardings, a 162% increase over its predecessor, the Texas Special bus circulator.



METRO Trolley System Serving Downtown

TRANSIT STREETS PROGRAM

Scheduled for completion in 2004, the METRO Downtown/Midtown Transit Streets Program will create a model transit community with rebuilt streets, widened sidewalks, improved drainage, distinctive new bus shelters, streetlights, landscaping, and information kiosks. The \$200 million cooperative effort between METRO, the City of Houston, the Houston Downtown Management District and the Federal Transit Administration will rebuild approximately 30 street-miles with reinforced concrete lanes, widened sidewalks, new curbs and trench drains, and upgraded utilities. Some water and sewer lines being replaced have not been upgraded in more than 30 years.

SECTION APPENDIX C: MAIN STREET CORRIDOR PROJECTS

Billions of dollars in projects are currently at some stage of development in Houston's Main Street Corridor. The following inventory provides an understanding of the types of activities that the Main Street Coalition is helping to plan and/or leverage into an overall revitalization program.



Aerial View of Houston's Main Street from Reliant Park to Downtown

COMPLETE PROJECTS

Complete projects are constructed and occupied to a substantial extent.

UNDERWAY PROJECTS

Underway projects have been funded and key design decisions are complete such that construction is or will soon be underway.

PLANNING PROJECTS

Planning projects have an identified funding source and specific content, but do not necessarily have secured funding and/or may be awaiting final content decisions.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECTS

Conceptual projects are without a well-identified funding source (e.g., a list of possible future funding opportunities) and with content ideas that remain subject to further discussion.

SOUTH MAIN / RELIANT PARK AREA PROJECTS

COMPLETE PROJECTS

1. Hotel Renovations — \$30 million
American Hospitality has renovated six hotels including Radisson Hotel Astrodome.
2. Lanesborough Apartments — \$16 million
New construction.
3. Eckerd Drugs — \$2 million
New construction.

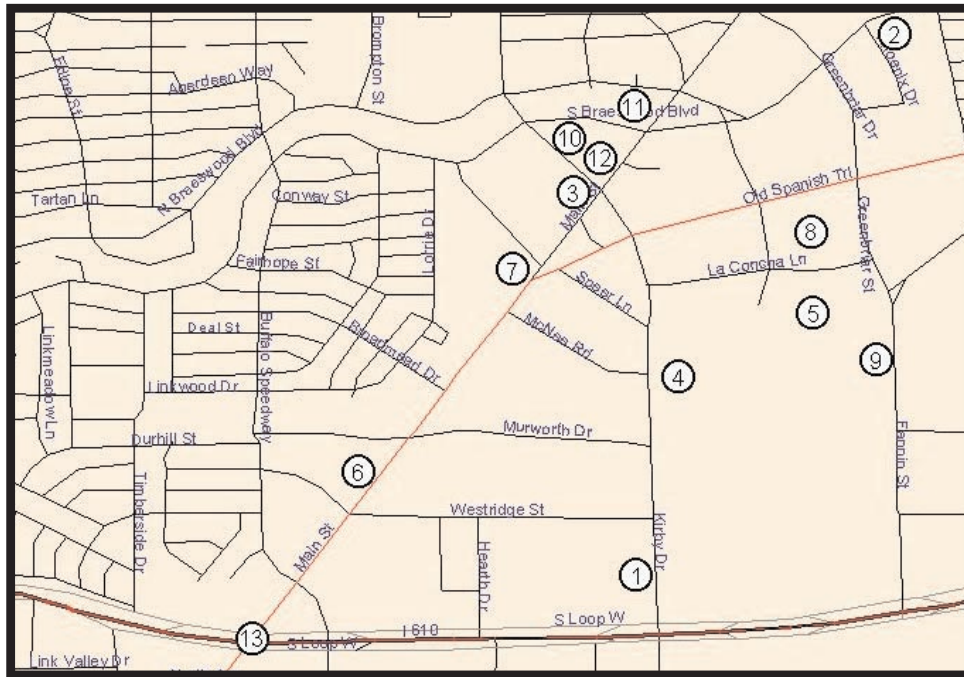
UNDERWAY PROJECTS

4. Reliant Park Stadium for NFL and Rodeo — \$310 million

A new 69,500-seat, retractable roof stadium is being built on county-owned land currently used for parking just west of the Astrodome. Construction is scheduled to be complete by August 2002.

5. Reliant Park Exhibit Hall, Parking, & Pedestrian Bridges

A new exhibit hall has been planned for the northeast corner of the Reliant Park parking lot to replace the Astrohalls facility (which will be removed). Parking facilities are being added to the west of existing parking.



South Main / Reliant Park Area

6. Reconstruction of Main Street & Old Spanish Trail

The Texas Department of Transportation highway improvement project includes Kirby to I-610 South Loop. The Main Street Coalition successfully nominated a landscape enhancement package for implementation by TxDOT with local participation.

7. Target — \$17 million

New location for the South Main retail store.

PLANNING PROJECTS

8. Columbia Woman's Hospital of Texas

Expansion of this facility to add 61,000 square feet.

9. Reliant Park Light Rail Station

A light rail station will be built along Fannin Street, possibly in conjunction with a parking garage and/or direct access to the new exhibition hall.

10. Kirby Glen Center Conversion

A shopping center is being converted into a medical/professional building by developers Bobby Orr and Mike Baker.

11. Brays Bayou Federal Flood Control Project

Enhancement of Brays Bayou using landscaping, public art, and greenspace development under the leadership of the Harris County Flood Control District.

12. Albertsons — \$7 million

New construction.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECTS

13. METRO High-Capacity Transit Corridor

South Main Street to the south of I-610 South Loop is identified as a priority high-capacity transit corridor and METRO will be planning transportation enhancement projects to serve neighborhoods in southeast Harris County and Fort Bend County.

Reliant Park Master Plan

The Reliant Park master plan includes ideas for replacing the Astroarena, major renovation of the Astrodome, and other projects to complement existing and planned facilities.

Texas Medical Center Long-Range Expansion Planning

This area is considered a likely location for institutional expansion related to Texas Medical Center.

TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER / RICE UNIVERSITY AREA PROJECTS

COMPLETE PROJECTS

1. Hermann Pavilion (2000) — \$200 million

This 12-story building replaces outdated facilities and features a new trauma center, women's services facility, and Hermann Children's Hospital. The building's Mediterranean-inspired architecture reflects the style of Memorial Hermann's original Cullen Pavilion.

2. Dr. John B. Coleman Health Science Center (1999) — \$20 million

New home of the Houston Community College-Southeast Health Science Center serves 1,100 students in nursing and allied health career programs.

3. Shriners' Hospital for Children (1996)

Pediatric orthopedic facility, known as the "only hospital in Texas Medical Center without a billing department."

4. Ronald McDonald House (1997) — \$10 million

Ronald McDonald House of Houston, a home-away-from-home for families of children undergoing treatment for cancer or other serious illnesses at hospitals in Texas Medical Center, provides a place where the whole family can stay in a home-like environment.

5. Alkek Hospital (1998)

This 13-story addition to the main M. D. Anderson complex includes a comprehensive critical care unit, a pediatric unit complete with an indoor playground and classrooms, and a rehabilitation therapy gym.

6. Ann and Charles Duncan Hall (1996)

Rice University built this facility for computational engineering.

7. James A. Baker, III Hall (1997)

Home to Rice University's Baker Institute, a public policy research and education center.

8. Dell Butcher Hall (1998)

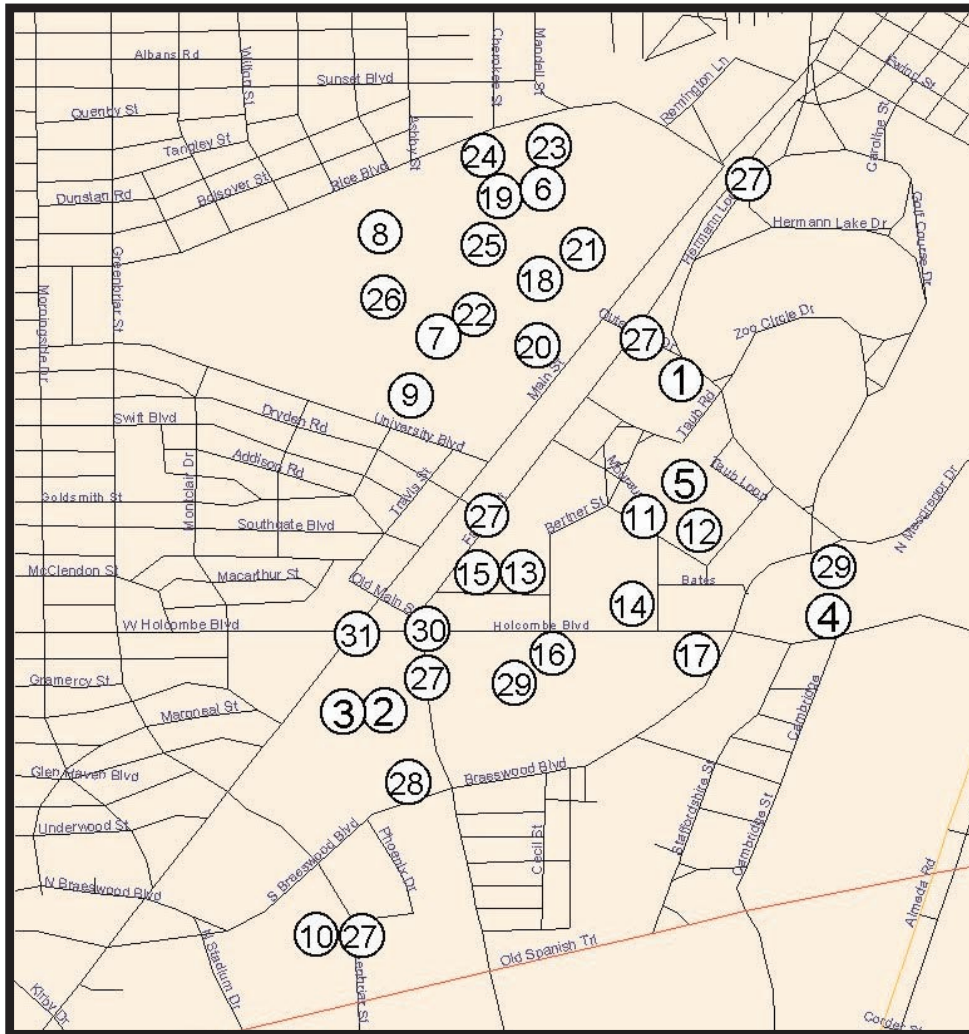
New Rice University Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology provides laboratories and classrooms for faculty of various departments doing research on nanoscale science and technology.

9. Reckling Park Baseball Stadium (2000) — \$6 million

Rice University replaced its baseball stadium with a 3,427-seat facility. Temporary bleachers will bring the total capacity to 5,667, sufficient to host NCAA regional tournaments and other major events.

10. Smith Lands Parking Lots and Garage 17 (2000) — \$12 million

Texas Medical Center parking expansion providing 4,800 surface lot spaces and 1,800 parking garage spaces; Smith Lands lots to be linked to the planned light rail station.



Texas Medical Center / Rice University Area

UNDERWAY PROJECTS

11. Basic Science Research Building (2000) — \$137 million

Nine-story University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center building is the first facility in the new Texas Medical Center Research Campus, which could feature up to six interconnected buildings and function as a single, unified research complex among neighboring institutions.

12. Baylor Center for Comparative Medicine (2000) — \$40 million

New research building built underground, beneath an existing courtyard.

13. Texas Heart Institute (2001) — \$42 million

New nine-story Denton A. Cooley building will contain a full spectrum of cardiovascular services offered by St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital. It will provide laboratory space for cutting-edge research, a telemedicine center, a 500-seat conference center, surgical suites, and other patient care facilities.

14. M.D. Anderson Faculty Center (2001) — \$49 million

M. D. Anderson Cancer Center will consolidate faculty offices currently located in several buildings on its main campus in a 13-floor faculty center. The facility will also include a fitness center and support functions.

15. Texas Children's Hospital Expansion and Renovation (2002) — \$345 million

Texas Children's Hospital, already the largest pediatric hospital in the nation, will nearly double its structural space in an expansion project that includes a new 15-story inpatient addition to the existing west tower, construction of a new 15-floor outpatient center, and renovation of the existing Feigin Center into a dedicated research hub.

16. Nursing and Biomedical Sciences Building (2002) — \$60 million

New University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center building will be the home for programs of the Schools of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, provide services for students, faculty, staff and alumni at all the Health Science Center schools, and provide space for continuing education and professional conferences. Building is designed to be an environmentally conscious "green" building.

17. Jesse H. Jones Rotary International Expansion (2000) — \$14 million

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center is building an addition of 124 guest rooms to its hotel facility that houses patients and families.

18. Humanities Building (2000) — \$38 million

Rice University is building a new facility for its religious studies, philosophy, history, and interdisciplinary programs.

It occupies the last building site on the main quad.

19. Old Chemistry Building Renovation (2000) — \$29 million

Rice University is renovating and expanding its facilities for chemistry education and research.

20. Weiss Residential College (2001) — \$23 million

Rice University is replacing a student residential facility housing 234 students. The project includes replacement of two kitchen and dining facilities.

21. Humanities Buildings Renovation (2003)

Following construction of the new humanities and business school buildings, Rayzor, Sewall, and Herring halls will be renovated for humanities programs.

22. New Jones Business School (2002) — \$44 million

Rice University is building a new home for the Jones Graduate School of Management. The existing facility will become the home of humanities programs.

23. Jones and Brown Residential Colleges Expansion (2003)

Rice University is replacing existing student commons facilities and kitchen facilities, and building new housing for 106 students.

24. Martel Residential College (2001) — \$26 million

New residence hall providing space for 235 Rice University students, with dining and common facilities, and housing for faculty associated with the college.

25. Fondren Library Renovation (2003)

Rice University is improving its Fondren Library through renovation and a major expansion.

Graduate Center Housing — \$8.2 million

Rice University is exploring plans for new graduate housing.

PLANNING PROJECTS

26. Shepherd School of Music Renovation

Rice University's education and performance facility will be upgraded.

27. METRO Light Rail Stations

Five light rail stations are planned that will provide service to the Texas Medical Center area, including Sunset (Rice University/Hermann Park), MacGregor, Dryden, Galen (TMC Transit Center), and Smith Lands. The Astrodome and/or South Park-and-Ride stations are also important stations for access to Texas Medical Center.

28. Brays Bayou Federal Flood Control Project

Features of the Brays Bayou plan that would directly affect the Main Street Corridor include six bridge replacements and widening of both sides of the bayou channel.

- State Highway 288 — \$23.8 million
- Almeda — \$3.2 million
- South Braeswood — \$5.6 million
- Greenbriar — \$3.2 million
- South Main — \$4.9 million
- Kirby — \$4.5 million

29. Cambridge and Bertner Street Bridges

Two bridges

CONCEPTUAL PROJECTS

30. Reconstruction of Holcombe Street

Stakeholders have discussed the idea of eliminating the underpasses beneath Holcombe Street at Main and Fannin streets and creating a large plaza in the area. No formal discussions or investigations of this concept have taken place.

31. Convocation Center — \$37 million

Rice University is exploring plans for a new conference and event facility.

MUSEUM DISTRICT / HERMANN PARK AREA PROJECTS

COMPLETE PROJECTS

1. Holocaust Museum Houston (1996)

The first institution of its kind in the Southwest, the Holocaust Museum Houston serves as a memorial to the millions of people who were imprisoned and killed in Nazi death camps during World War II. It teaches a message of tolerance and respect for all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or background.

2. Museum of Health and Medical Science (1996)

Museum of Health and Medical Science presents a Texas-sized view of the human body from the inside, and includes theaters, classrooms, and other facilities to support its many programs.

3. Contemporary Arts Museum Renovation (1997)

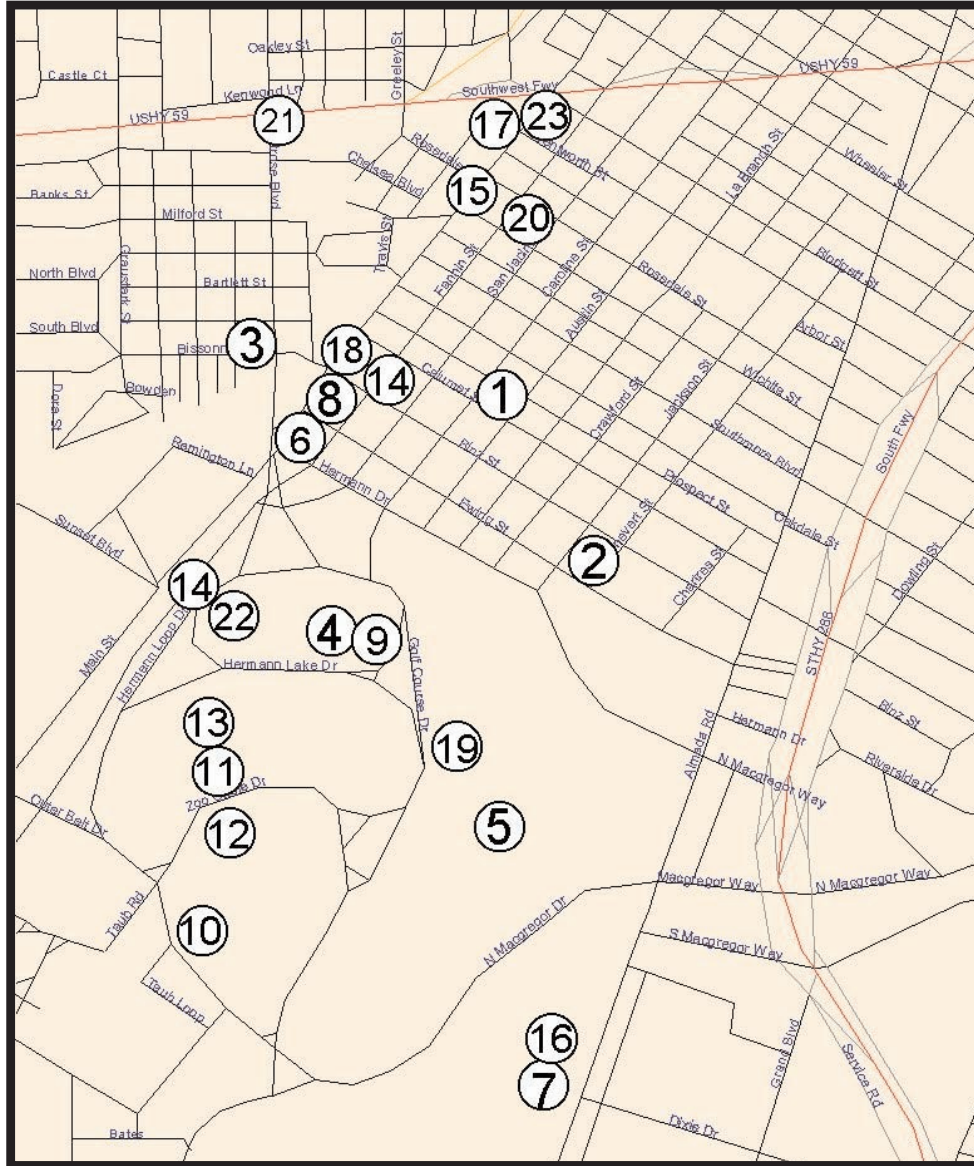
Museum renovated interior and exterior of its facility.

4. Miller Outdoor Theatre Renovation (1998) — \$5 million

Expansion and renovation of this open-air theatre and grounds make the facility more comfortable, more beautiful, and easier to manage.

5. Public Golf Course Renovation (1999) — \$4 million

Hermann Park golf course was renovated and a new clubhouse was built. The newly configured course includes additional lakes, rolling topography, and a new driving range.



Hermann Park / Museum District Area

6. Warwick Park Plaza Hotel Restoration (1999)

Hotel was restored to improve and enhance its exterior, public areas, guest rooms, and meeting and function space. Built in 1926, the 308-room Warwick is noted for European-style architecture with imported marble from Portugal, priceless antique tapestries, hand-carved French paneling, and extensive facilities.

7. Bayou Parkland (2000) — \$1 million

Bayou Parkland is an 80-acre area in Hermann Park straddling Brays Bayou, including an urban forest, a Post Oak grove, and a wooded hill. Recent improvements include a multi-use pavilion, picnic areas, reforestation, and forest trails.

8. Museum of Fine Arts, Audrey Jones Beck Building (2000) — \$83 million

New exhibition facility doubles the exhibit space of the Museum of Fine Arts and catapults the MFAH from 30th to 6th largest art museum in the nation in terms of exhibition space. In addition, the Beck Building includes a restaurant, museum store, and other public amenities. New visitors center will provide ticketing, information area, and parking garage.

UNDERWAY PROJECTS

9. Miller Outdoor Theatre, Phase II Improvements (2000) — \$3 million

Improvements will include a new concession building, re-grading of the hill, and a natural amphitheater on the back of the hill facing the Reflection Pool.

10. Children's Zoo (2000)

11. John P. McGovern Lake Expansion (2000) — \$4 million

Hermann Park's John P. McGovern Lake, the only publicly owned inner-city lake in Houston, is being expanded and renovated to include new islands for migratory birds, safety improvements, and a pier and boathouse.

12. North MacGregor Beautification and Zoo West Entrance (2000) — \$4 million

North MacGregor widening, landscaping, and street improvements, followed by a new zoo entrance, will transform the street into a parkway with a plaza at the entrance to the zoo. The zoo entrance is intended to serve visitors from the Texas Medical Center and patrons arriving by vans, school buses, and public transit.

PLANNING PROJECTS

13. Heart of the Park Renovation (2001) — \$10 million

The "Heart of the Park," including the reflection pool, the Sam Houston Monument circle, and several gardens and plazas, comprises the grand civic entry into Hermann Park. Although the single row of live oaks along the current reflection pool have matured into one of the park's most familiar features, the excavation of the existing reflection pool was left incomplete and the area leading to the lake unresolved. With original plans never refined and implemented, the reflection pool needs refurbishment to add a black clay bottom and sculpted white limestone edges with a seating ledge. A contemplative garden will be added on the east side of the reflection pool.

14. METRO Light Rail Stations (2004)

Two light rail stations are planned that will provide service to the area, including Sunset (Hermann Park) and Binz (Museum District). One other station would be on the edge of this area at MacGregor (Zoo).

15. METRO Transit Streets Program (2004)

METRO is reconstructing Main Street to Calumet Street.

16. Bayou Parkland, Phase II Improvements — \$5 million

An Outdoor Educational Center, expanded and improved "educational wetlands," an overlook tower, and a pedestrian bridge over Brays Bayou will be added to the Bayou Parkland area of Hermann Park. The Outdoor Education Center (OEC) will replace the current trailer classroom with a multi-purpose classroom, a greenhouse classroom, a porch, an office area, and other support spaces. A greenway connection through the golf course to the center of Hermann Park is also planned.

17. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (2000) — \$1 million

Renovation to create a new museum and artistic center.

18. Livable Communities Initiatives Project

This pedestrian environment and transit enhancement project for the Museum District would improve sidewalks and wayfinding, as well as help attract redevelopment projects.

19. Old Clubhouse Renovation — \$3 million

Original Spanish colonial style clubhouse will be restored to become a community center and information center for Hermann Park.

20. Czech Cultural Center

The Czech Cultural Center expects to relocate within five years from its current home in Northwest Mall to a new building with an auditorium, a restaurant featuring Czech cuisine, language classrooms, a museum, a research library and archives to encourage genealogical research.

21. Montrose Boulevard Bridge

US59 Southwest Freeway overpass at Montrose Boulevard is being moved below grade, and a new bridge over the freeway will be needed for Montrose Boulevard. TxDOT will build a standardized project, but discussions have occurred to obtain funding to enhance bridge architecture.

22. Sunset Boulevard Park Entrance

A new entrance to the park will allow Sam Houston Circle to be renovated, including relocation of parking spaces.

23. US59 Freeway Exit to Main Street at Wentworth

New exit ramp will give traffic from the Southwest Freeway access to Midtown, the Museum District, the Texas Medical Center, and the Main Street Corridor. Four acres of stormwater detention will be constructed alongside the exit ramp.

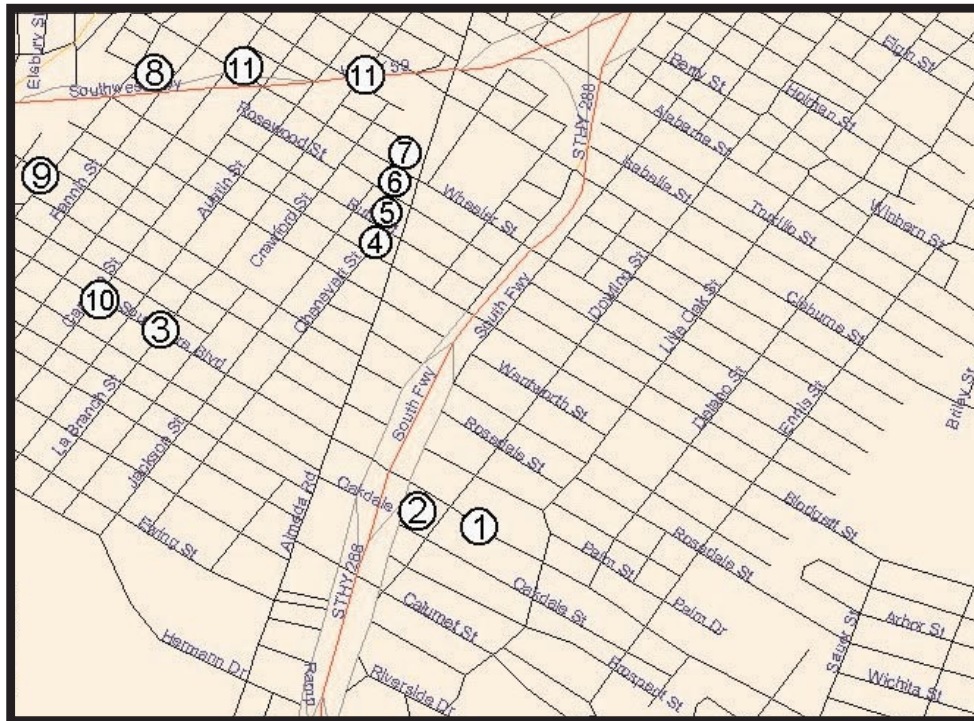
Discussions have occurred to obtain funding to enhance the architecture and landscape of this new entry to Main Street.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECT

Transit Circulator Service and Park & Ride Facility

Museum District and park stakeholders have discussed the idea of circulator bus service to facilitate use of more distant parking alternatives and improve links between the facilities. A park & ride facility is also envisioned to serve the area. This could be created in conjunction with the Texas Medical Center.

GREATER THIRD WARD AREA PROJECTS



Greater Third Ward Area (Including Area West of Scott Street)

COMPLETE PROJECTS

No major projects have been recently completed in this area.

UNDERWAY PROJECTS

1. City of Houston Sidewalk Repairs
Sidewalk repairs on Southmore from Dowling to Scott.
2. Denny's Restaurant
New restaurant at Southmore between Dowling and SH 288, including some sidewalk reconstruction.
3. METRO Transit Streets Program-Traffic Management Enhancements
Bus stop enhancements and sidewalk repairs on Almeda, Southmore, and LaBranch streets.
4. SOHO Café
Renovation of storefront into a café on Almeda.
5. Total Renal Care
New medical facility development on Almeda.
6. Weingarten Center
Renovation of strip center into mixed-use retail facility on Almeda.
7. Womack Retail Center
Renovation of strip center into new retail and office space development on Almeda.

PLANNING PROJECTS

8. METRO Light Rail Station (2004)
A light rail station is planned at Wheeler Street. Other stations that will provide links to Third Ward include the Binz, Holman, and McGowan stations, as well as stations in Texas Medical Center with transit links to Third Ward.
9. METRO Transit Streets Program (2004)
METRO is reconstructing Main Street to Calumet Street.
10. Southmore Street Livable Communities Initiatives Project
This pedestrian environment and transit enhancement project for the area between Dowling and Main along Southmore would fill in the gaps between recent sidewalk and bus stop improvements, as well as provide additional enhancements to this important pedestrian corridor serving several residential areas.
11. Wheeler-US59 Crossover Livable Communities Initiatives Project
This pedestrian environment and transit enhancement project for the area between Almeda and Main Street along Wheeler and US59 would improve sidewalks and wayfinding, as well as help attract redevelopment projects. A multimodal transit facility is envisioned as part of the planned light rail station.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECTS

Museum of African-American History

MIDTOWN AREA PROJECTS

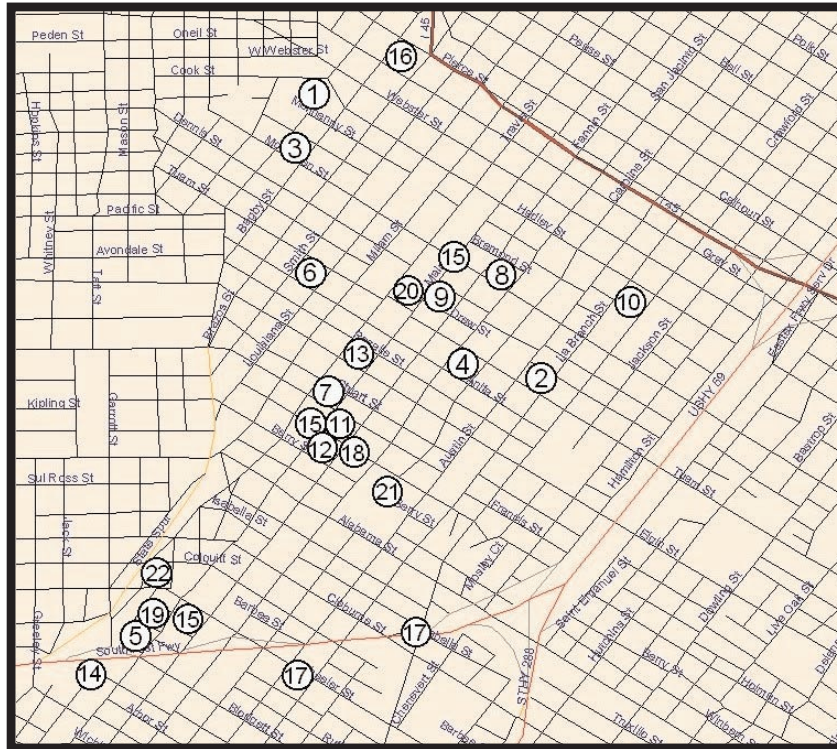
COMPLETE PROJECTS

1. Apartments — \$90 million

Approximately 1,500 new and rehabilitated rental units, including some of the highest value properties in Houston.

2. Houses, Condominiums, and Townhouses — \$45 million

Approximately 225 new and rehabilitated private homes, including historic structures.



Midtown Area

3. Commercial and Retail Space — \$25 million

Approximately two dozen new and rehabilitated facilities, including several retail centers.

4. Westlake Noodle Company — \$4 million

New office and warehouse facility.

5. Days Inn Motor Hotel Rehabilitation — \$4 million

Rehabilitation of 188-room hotel and restaurant.

6. Catholic Charities of Houston — \$5.5 million

New four-story office and social service building.

7. Houston Planning Department Permitting Division — \$3 million

New parking facility and rehabilitation of two-story office building.

8. Search Center — \$4 million

Social service facility office building rehabilitation.

9. Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority — \$1 million

Rehabilitation of four-story building, including exterior and parking.

10. U.S. Postal Service Carrier Annex — \$3 million

New construction of a facility covering three blocks.

11. Trinity Episcopal Church — \$1 million

New chapel construction and interior rehabilitation.

12. The Ensemble Theater Renovation — \$1 million

Rehabilitation of theater.

UNDERWAY PROJECTS

Apartments — \$28 million

Approximately 190 new rental units.

Houses, Condominiums, and Townhouses — \$40 million

Approximately 200 new and rehabilitated private homes.

13. Houston Community College Administration Building and Parking Garage — \$52 million

Rehabilitation of Southwestern Bell Telephone building (Main at Elgin) into six stories of HCC administrative space and six stories of office retail property with total space for about 1,000 employees; construction of a seven-story parking garage (1,600 cars) with retail space on ground level.

METRO Midtown Transit Streets Program — \$43 million

Reconstruction of major north-south thoroughfares and improvements to several east-west streets, including some narrowing of roadways, new lights, new signals, and other street-related amenities.

PLANNING PROJECTS

14. US59 Freeway Exit to Main Street at Wentworth

New exit ramp will give traffic from the Southwest Freeway access to Midtown, the Museum District, the Texas Medical Center, and the Main Street Corridor. Four acres of stormwater detention will be constructed alongside the exit ramp.

Discussions have occurred to obtain funding to enhance the architecture and landscape of this new entry to Main Street

15. METRO Light Rail Stations (2004)

Three stations are planned for Midtown, including Wheeler, Holman, and McGowen streets.

Apartments

Approximately 425 rental units in planning.

Houses, Condominiums, and Townhouses

Approximately 450 new townhouses in planning.

16. Houston Technology Center

Nonprofit biotech business incubator including 43,000 square feet of office space to be rehabilitated using a \$1.1 million grant from the Economic Development Administration, managed by the Midtown Redevelopment Authority.

Midtown Streetlights — \$500,000

New pedestrian-oriented lighting with unique Midtown design targeted for active redevelopment areas.

17. Livable Communities Initiative Wheeler-US59 Crossover Project

Pedestrian and transit amenities, including sidewalk repair, lighting, landscaping, and other amenities.

18. Livable Communities Initiative Houston Community College Project

Pedestrian and transit amenities, including sidewalk repair, lighting, landscaping, and other amenities.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECTS

19. Livable Communities Initiative Wheeler-US59 Crossover Project

Proposed multi-use transit facility, including park & ride garage and possibly ideas including ground-floor retail, public flower market (to provide space for establishments that could be displaced due to light rail construction), childcare facility, health clinic, and other conveniences designed to attract visitors and commuters.

Memorial Park

Proposed multi-block park in northwest area of Midtown along Main Street.

20. McGowen-Anita Mixed-Use Development

Proposed mixed-use retail, office, residential, and public space development covering four contiguous blocks on the west side of Main Street, including the Hargrest College site.

Pocket Parks

Small parks with benches, water features, and other amenities at five to twenty locations on or near Main Street.

Enhanced Pathways and Sidewalks

Pedestrian enhancements on five to ten east-west streets to encourage retail-residential connections and reduce the need for driving.

21. Houston Community College Renovations

Library expansion, new daycare center, and student service center.

22. South Main Baptist Recreational Center

New facility proposed on Travis and Richmond.

High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA)

HSPVA is exploring various sites for a \$30 million school serving 800 students, which would be built by a partnership of HISD and the Friends of HSPVA. HSPVA was originally located in Midtown and its leadership has an interest in returning to a more urban location. HSPVA will add an important civic presence to the Main Street corridor.

Institute for Hispanic Cultures

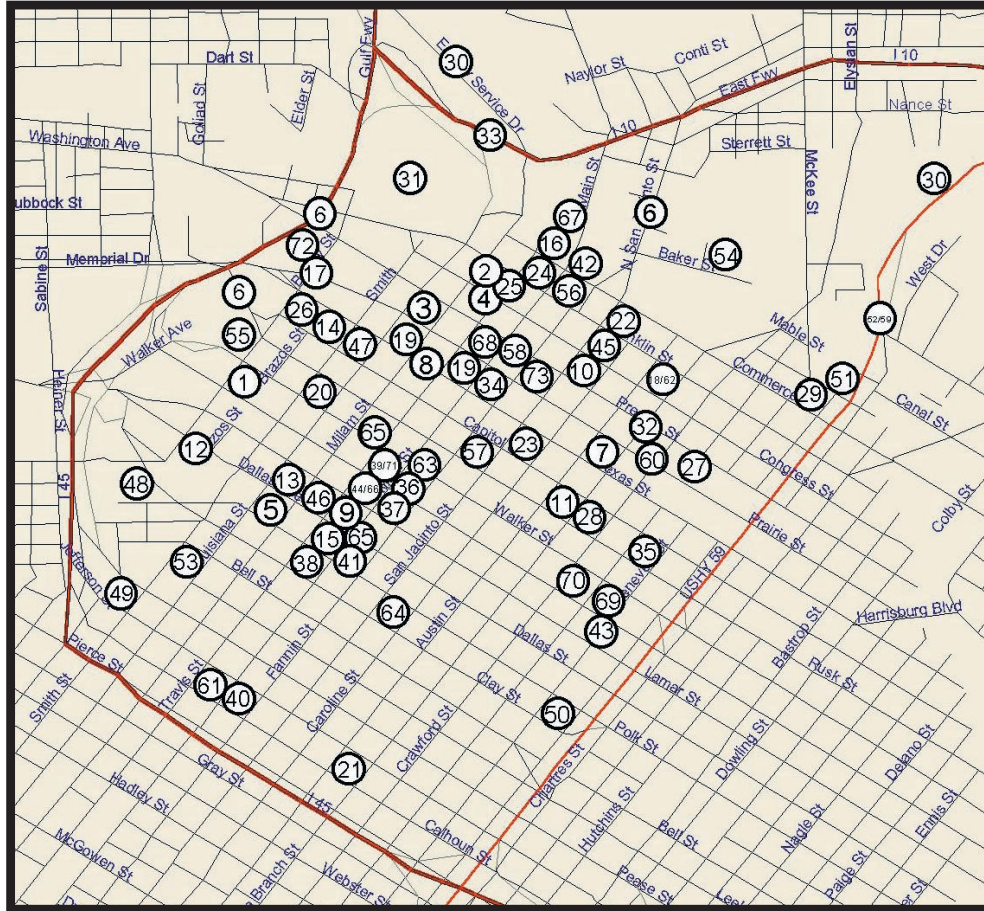
Public School Construction

Will Jones Exemplary Elementary School (HISD) is the only public school located in Midtown. Although no specific plans have been developed, stakeholders have discussed the inevitability of future demand for schools in the area as families return to the neighborhood.

DOWNTOWN AREA PROJECTS

COMPLETE PROJECTS

1. City Hall — \$17 million
Renovation and restoration of historic edifice and adjacent plazas.
2. Herman Estate Building — \$8 million
New 29-unit condominium.
3. Hogg Palace/Foley Building — \$5.6 million
Restoration of two buildings to provide 81 loft residences.
4. Market Square Clock Tower — \$0.3 million
Restoration completed on old city hall clock tower at Congress and Travis.
5. 1201 Louisiana Reconstruction — \$100 million, \$12 million
Restaurants, Clubs, and Retail — \$15 million
32 restaurants, clubs and retail stores.
6. Replacement of Bridges — \$10 million
TxDOT and City bridges over Buffalo Bayou for Capitol Avenue, Preston Avenue, Franklin Avenue, and San Jacinto Street.
7. Urban League Building — \$2 million
Redevelopment of Federal Reserve Bank building for Houston Area Urban League.
8. Texas Avenue Improvements — \$1 million
Houston Downtown Management District redevelopment of Texas Avenue streetscape from Bagby to Main.
9. Sakowitz Building Redevelopment — \$4 million
Redevelopment includes first-floor retail with parking above and façade restoration.
10. County Central Chilled Water Plant — \$20 million
Chilled water plant serves county buildings including new Criminal Justice Center.
11. Union Station District Plant — \$30 million
Houston Industries and Unicorn joint venture — first of four plants for district cooling system to include Enron Field.
12. Texaco - Doubletree Skywalk — \$4 million
Connection between Texaco Heritage Plaza and the Doubletree Allen Center Hotel.



Downtown Area

13. Reliant Energy Building (1996) — \$100 million
Renovation of HL&P headquarters.
14. Bayou Place/Albert Thomas Redevelopment (1997) — \$23 million
Theater, live entertainment, cinema, and restaurant complex.
15. City of Houston Police Administration Building (1997) — \$27 million
Building purchased and renovated by the City.
16. University of Houston Downtown (1997) — \$27 million
Two new buildings for student activities and academic support.
17. Sesquicentennial Park (1998) — \$18 million
Buffalo Bayou park and channel improvements.
18. SRO Residential Projects (1998) — \$5 million
New Hope housing (187 units).
19. The Rice (1998) — \$32 million
Renovation of historic structure into 312 loft and apartment units with retail.
20. Bob Lanier Building (1998) — \$43 million
Former HL&P building renovated for offices of Public Works and Engineering Department, Planning Department, and other functions.

21. St. Joseph Hospital (1998) — \$50 million
Garage and ambulatory care facility.
22. Criminal Justice Center (1999) — \$88 million
New facility is the heart of the Harris County Courts Complex.
23. Metropolitan Detention Center (2000) — \$36 million
U.S. Bureau of Prisons facility.
24. Commercial National Bank Building (2000) — \$5 million
Renovation of office space and retail/restaurant on the ground level.
25. 801 Congress (1999) — \$200,000
Former Henry Henke Building renovated into restaurants and office space.
26. Bayou Place Expansion (2000) — \$7 million
New nightclub, Hard Rock Café, comedy club, and outdoor plaza expansion.
27. Enron Field (2000) — \$265 million
The Harris County - Houston Sports Authority completed a 42,000-seat baseball stadium with a retractable roof, including renovation of historic Union Station, the railroad terminal for Houston from the 1910s to the 1970s, into offices, cafes, retail stores, and a tour theater.

UNDERWAY PROJECTS

28. Ar'talia at 1515 Rusk — \$65 million
New 25-story residential building with parking for Enron Field patrons
29. Harrisburg and Sunset Rails-to-Trails — \$1.6 million
A 2.7-mile hike & bike trail constructed on former railroad right-of-way linking eastside neighborhoods to downtown.
The first phase of this project is completed.
30. Houston Heritage Corridor White Oak Bayou and MKT/SP Rails to Trails project — \$7 million
A hike & bike trail connecting White Oak Bayou Park to Allen's Landing, and Buffalo Bayou hike & bike trail connecting Allen's Landing to Lockwood. The MKT/SP Rails to Trails project is also envisioned for this area and will connect to the Houston Heritage Corridor trail.
31. Buffalo Bayou Trail — \$6.9 million
Buffalo Bayou hike & bike trail connecting Sesquicentennial Park to Allen's Landing and UH-Downtown.
32. SRO Residential Project — \$2.3 million
Former King George Hotel, 100 units.
33. I-10 HOV Lane
Extension of existing lane into downtown, providing an unobstructed transit and carpool link to western suburbs.
34. McCrary Building — \$2 million
Mixed-use office/retail redevelopment.
35. Residential Projects — \$77 million
Keystone Condominiums (31 units), St. Germaine (107 loft apartments), 220 Main (30 condominium units), Bayou Lofts (100 units), Capitol Lofts (35 units), One Bayou Park (15-20 units), Franklin Lofts (66 lofts), 15 Chenevert Place (former Nabisco Bakery).
36. 1001 McKinney — \$30 million
Renovation of Texas American Bank into office development with parking garage.
37. One City Centre — \$22 million
Renovation of former First City building into office development with parking garage.

38. Travis Tower — \$21 million
Renovation of office building with new parking garage.
39. McKinney Place — \$15 million
Replacement of former Woolworth Building with a parking facility and retail at the street and tunnel levels.
40. 1801 Main Renaissance Office Tower — \$3 million
New facility.
41. HRI/Humble Oil Building — \$65 million
Renovation into a Marriott Courtyard and Residence Hotel and 80 apartments.
42. Buffalo Bayou Waterfront — \$4 million
Construction of hike & bike trail, renovation of Allen's Landing, and enhancement of Congress to Milam walkways, funded by federal transportation funds.
43. George R. Brown Convention Center Expansion — \$110 million
Expansion to add 250,000-500,000 square feet of exhibition/meeting rooms.
44. Office Building — \$150 Million
Century Development office building, parking, and retail space to be associated with the planned transit "Superstop" at Main, Walker, and Lamar.
45. Harris County Civil Justice Center — \$119 million
Bond election passed in 1999.
46. Americana Building — \$4 million
Renovation and upgrades.
47. Jones Plaza Renovation — \$6 million
Bidding in early 2000.
48. Metropolitan Racquet Club — \$4 million
Renovation with addition of business center, day spa, and dining facility.
49. Crowne Plaza Cullen Center (2000) — \$25 million
Renovation of the 225-room Whitehall Hotel.
50. Holiday Inn Express (2000)
Hotel offering 120 rooms.
51. Star of Hope Men's Shelter and Day Care (2000) — \$5.4 million
New facility to serve people who are homeless.
52. US59/Eastex Ramps (2000) — \$41 million
Ramps serving northeast/ballpark area of downtown from US59/Eastex and I-10.
53. Enron Center South and Parking Garage (2001) — \$200 million
New 40-story building and 13-level parking garage connected by a circular sky bridge.
54. Harris County Jail (2001) — \$70 million
Replacement of central jail providing 3,100 beds.
55. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts (2001) — \$85 million
Music Hall Foundation conducting fundraising for the new home of Theater Under The Stars and Pace Theatrical.
56. Islamic Center (2000)
Conversion of the former Houston National Bank building into an Islamic center.
57. Ritz Carlton Hotel and Apartment/Condos (2001) — \$125 million
Luxury hotel with approximately 300 rooms, 35 apartments, and 49 condo units.

58. Cotswold Project (2002) — \$58 million

Historic enhancement of 85 blocks, with a focus on streets linking the Theater District to Enron Field, including sidewalk replacement, landscaping, diagonal parking, historic streetlights, fountains, heightened security, and other amenities.

METRO Downtown Transit Streets Program (2004) — \$219 million

Redevelopment of twenty Downtown and Midtown streets, including METRO street reconstruction, City replacement of water and sewer lines, and Downtown Management District streetscape betterments.

PLANNING PROJECTS

59. US59/Eastex Ramps, Phase II (2003) — \$41 million

Ramps serving northeast/ballpark area of downtown from US59/Eastex and I-10.

60. Downtown Transit Center — \$17 million

Bus and light rail transfer facility.

61. Ballpark Place

Proposed tower of residential units, office space, and multi-level parking garage.

62. Harris County Parking Garage — \$12.8 million

Parking to serve new county buildings.

63. 905 Main

Renovation of former San Jacinto Savings building.

64. South Texas College of Law — \$16 million

High-technology addition to law library and renovations.

65. Superstop Linkages Project — \$2 million

Livable Communities Initiative project (pedestrian/transit enhancements) in the Superstop area.

66. Transit to Tunnel Superstop — \$9 million

Connection between bus, rail, and tunnel system in new Century Development building; engineering study underway by Downtown Management District.

67. University of Houston Downtown Projects

CONCEPTUAL PROJECTS

68. Citizens Bank Building

Potential office space project

69. Convention Center Hotel — \$160 million

City is working on plans to finance and build a hotel with at least 1,200 rooms.

70. Downtown Arena (2003) — \$235 million

Conceptual planning completed; November 2,1999 referendum defeated; discussions continue with a target opening date of November 2003.

71. 914 Main Commercial Building

Purchased by investor group, redevelopment plans undisclosed.

72. Redevelopment of Fire Station No. 1 and Waterworks Plant

A special committee established by Mayor Lee Brown has reviewed proposals for the redevelopment of two downtown landmarks that include ideas for entertainment, restaurant, and residential development.

73. Sam Houston Hotel, William Penn Hotel

Potential loft residence projects

NEAR NORTHSIDE AREA PROJECTS

COMPLETE PROJECTS

No major projects have been recently completed in this area.

UNDERWAY PROJECTS

No major projects are underway in this area.

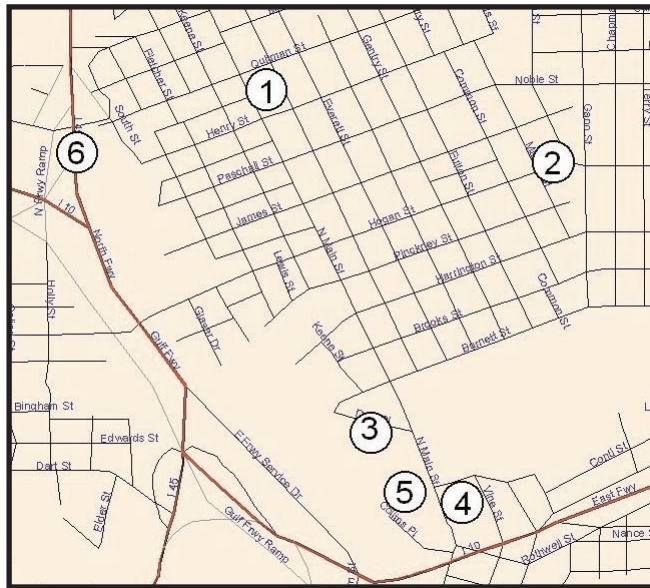
PLANNING PROJECTS

1. Lamar/Lee Elementary School Replacement

HISD is in the initial planning stage for an \$11.5 million school located in the area of North Main and Quitman streets.

2. Near Northside Youth Center — \$300,000

Houston Works is rehabilitating the old Casa de Amigos building at Hogan and Cochran.



Near Northside Area

3. Trammell Crow Residential Project

Trammel Crow Residential has acquired 17 acres of land to build a garden-style apartment complex. Its most recent statement indicated that the facility would be a four-story building over several levels of parking.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECTS

4. Olympic Village

A future Olympic Village could be located in this area.

Near Northside Master Plan

Near Northside master plan would include a study of housing, commercial property, vacant land, parks, and infrastructure to develop a plan for government service and land-use enhancements (public transit, parks, libraries, etc.). This plan is a requirement before the City can foreclose tax delinquent properties and transfer them to nonprofit organizations for affordable housing development.

5. North Intermodal Transit Center

Stakeholders in Downtown have suggested a transit center north of I-10 somewhere close to Main Street. Transit center could include facilities on both north and south sides of the Union Pacific tracks that cross over Main Street tunnel, joined using an existing pedestrian walkway through Main Street tunnel (walkway is safely separated from vehicular traffic). Transit center would be an integrated solution to several problems and opportunities, with a focal point on an additional light rail station in the southern portion of the transit center.

- A bus transfer facility (northern portion of transit center) would enhance bus service and light rail access for Near Northside and adjacent neighborhoods by providing transfer service for 8-10 bus routes that currently travel through Downtown. This would avoid traffic flow problems with buses traveling into Downtown along the light-rail route and having to turn to travel parallel streets, while increasing light-rail ridership and reducing bus operating costs.
- A new Amtrak station would provide a direct link between Amtrak and light rail, and could possibly improve Amtrak service by shifting its trains from the older southern Union Pacific tracks to the northern Union Pacific track system, which has better potential for the new Houston-Dallas route.
- A link to the Houston Heritage and MKT/SP hike & bike trails (under planning and construction) would provide a convenient way for bicyclists to reach Downtown events and employment while avoiding busy streets.
- A new parking garage would enhance existing parking at the site used by University of Houston-Downtown by making the parking useful for other purposes during periods when the university does not need the capacity.
- Entire facility would be a first step toward an Olympic Festival Park, which the City and the Olympic Committee have suggested could be located at this site, particularly if accessible by light rail.

6. Texas Department of Transportation I-45 MIS

Along the I-45/US59 corridor, existing and projected traffic has warranted the need to conduct a Major Investment Study (MIS). The Houston District of TxDOT initiated this study in August 1999. The I-45/US59 MIS is being conducted to specifically to study transportation needs from US59 at Spur 527, south of Downtown Houston, north along I-45 to Beltway 8 in north Harris County.

SECTION APPENDIX D: FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING

Although most of the billions of dollars in investment occurring in the Main Street Corridor are private, public planning, and infrastructure investments are also playing a key role in shaping and encouraging the urban design that will create a signature corridor. Among the many sources of public investment, the following three funding sources have goals that are particularly compatible with those of the Main Street Coalition and are important implementation tools.

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY AND SYSTEM PRESERVATION PILOT PROGRAM

The Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program is a tool to make communities more livable - by preserving greenspace, easing traffic congestion, and pursuing “smart growth” strategies. Administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, TCSP was created by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) to improve transportation efficiency, reduce negative effects of transportation on the environment, reduce the future need for costly infrastructure investments, and give people better access to jobs, services, and trade centers. The City of Houston has been awarded two \$500,000 grants by TCSP in support of its Main Street Corridor Planning and Research Project.

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

STEP provides for the implementation of non-traditional transportation-related projects such as the restoration of historic transportation facilities, pedestrian facilities, and the mitigation of water pollution from highway runoff. STEP is a competitive program funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered by TxDOT. Eligible projects must demonstrate a strong relationship to the surface transportation system by function or impact, fit into eligible categories, and go beyond standard transportation activities.

Two Main Street Corridor projects have been fully funded through STEP in 2000. The Main Street Coalition successfully nominated the US90A/Main Street Landscape Enhancement Project for a \$2.4 million STEP project to enhance a TxDOT street construction project to include beautification of the center median and adjacent right-of-way of the eight-lane boulevard. The Buffalo Bayou Partnership obtained \$1.2 million for its Allen’s Landing park project. Construction of Phase I of the park will begin in 2000 on the east side of Main Street, and the STEP funds will expand the park to the west side of Main Street, including walkways, landscaping, park furniture, and historic interpretation.

FEDERAL LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE PROGRAM

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) initiated the Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) to strengthen the link between transit and communities. Transit systems can provide an alternative means of personal mobility, increase capacity when needed, and contribute to the quality of life in communities. Transit facilities and services that promote more livable communities are ones that are customer-friendly, community-oriented, well designed, and are most likely to result from a planning and design process with active community involvement.

FTA describes the purpose of the federal transit laws as improving the quality of life in urban and rural communities through the use of transit systems and recognizing them as the lifeblood of livable communities, not simply to fund the capital and operating costs of transit systems. Using flexible funding provisions, the FTA LCI strengthens funding opportunities for transit investments that meet the needs of communities. Eligible activities include:

- Property acquisition, restoration or demolition of existing structures, site preparation, utilities, building foundations, walkways, and open space physically and functionally related to mass transportation facilities;
- Enhancements to transit stations, park & ride lots, and transfer facilities incorporating community services such as daycare, health care and public safety;
- Safety elements such as lighting, surveillance, community police, and security services; and
- Site design improvements including sidewalks, aerial walkways, bus access, and kiss-and-ride facilities.

Various FTA funds may be used to implement projects reflecting the LCI principles. Many of these funds are allocated by formula to specific agencies such as METRO. Other FTA funds are allocated by applying to FTA for grants or through the Congressional appropriations process. FTA's LCI is a means of establishing a stronger interrelationship between land use and transportation systems in the Main Street Corridor. The Main Street Corridor can be enhanced by taking advantage of this program to improve the pedestrian environment and transit service through infrastructure improvements that encourage redevelopment to occur in a complementary manner. The Main Street Coalition facilitated the development of five LCI projects and is seeking \$12 million to build the projects from various sources as a part of this Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT (CASH AND IN-KIND)

City of Houston

Harris County

Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County

Bank of Houston

Peter Brown

Central Bank of Houston

Central Houston, Inc.

Chase Bank of Texas

Houston Community College System

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo

Houston Museum District Association

Making Main Street Happen, Inc.

Midtown Redevelopment Authority

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Rice University

South Main Center Association

Texas Medical Center

The Goodman Corporation

E. D. Wulfe



Plan prepared by:

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